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FACULTAD DE TEOLOGÍA

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**SAINT CYPRIAN'S IDEAS ON  
«LOVE THY NEIGHBOUR»**

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## INTRODUCTION

«Charity is a supernatural gift of God by which we love God above all things, and our neighbour as ourselves for God's sake»<sup>1</sup>. This definition of the virtue of charity, widely accepted, is based on the *Summa Theologiae* of St. Thomas Aquinas<sup>2</sup>. The study of this virtue is always of significance because it is the object of the first two commandments, a summary of all the law and the prophets<sup>3</sup>.

When our Lord was asked which was the greatest commandment of the law, he replied, «Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart and with thy whole soul and with thy whole mind. This is the greatest and the first commandment»<sup>4</sup>. With these words, Christ reaffirms what had been commanded in the Old Testament<sup>5</sup> in relation to man's love of God. With reference to love of one's neighbour, this commandment is already found in the Old Testament: «Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself»<sup>6</sup>; and Christ places this as the second commandment<sup>7</sup>, but He goes further when He says, «love your enemies; do good to them that hate you; and pray for them that persecute and calumniate you»<sup>8</sup>. He also gives a new aspect to loving one's neighbour when he says, «A new commandment I give unto you: that you love one another, as I have loved you, that you also love one another»<sup>9</sup>. Our love for others has to be supernatural, as Christ's love for us.

Charity is greater than faith and hope<sup>10</sup>. It is the most excellent of all the virtues<sup>11</sup>. Without it, all our other works are to no avail<sup>12</sup>. It is the form of all the virtues<sup>13</sup> ordaining all our virtuous actions towards God. In writing to the Colossians, Saint Paul, after exhorting them to live a series of virtues, says, «But abode all these things have charity, which is the bond of perfection»<sup>14</sup>.

Thus we see the great importance of the virtue of charity. A study of this virtue is a study of the essence of Christianity, of how a Christian should live. The true Christian will try to put

charity into effect at all times, loving God and consequently loving his fellow man for God's sake putting into practice the spiritual and corporal works of mercy. The Christian will love the things of God, the Church, the Sacraments, the Liturgy. He will also avoid sin and speak out against evil, since his love for God will bring him to abhor any offence against Him.

Many of these aspects are seen in the writing of Saint Cyprian. There would seem to be a justification for the study of the virtue of charity in the works of Saint Cyprian, bearing in mind that, to date, this aspect has been rather neglected.

The tendency so far has been to study his doctrine on Ecclesiology and Sacramentology. The present classical studies such as the work of D'Alés<sup>15</sup>, which is a comprehensive systematic presentation of the works of Saint Cyprian, of its very nature does not consider in detail the concept of charity in the works of the Bishop of Carthage. One could say the same about the works of Benson<sup>16</sup>, Koch<sup>17</sup> and Saxer<sup>18</sup>.

Saint Cyprian's works are characterised by their oratorical and practical nature: he wrote to meet the needs of the moment, rather than to produce a speculative, systematic treatise on any one subject. Because of this, the method we have chosen to follow consists of critically analysing his writings and offering a synthesis of his thought and teaching on the love of one's neighbour.

A word should be said about the editions of Saint Cyprian's writings which were used. As Bévenot says, «Hartel's edition of Cyprian's works in the C.S.E.I. has long been recognised to be unsatisfactory: the MSS which he used were too few and not always the best; his use of them often showed inaccuracy and lack of judgement»<sup>19</sup>. Therefore, wherever possible, use has been made of the most recent critical edition, *Corpus Christianorum*. When a specific writing has not appeared in this work, we have used the edition of Campos who has improved on the edition of Hartel and also of epistles as found in the Bayard edition<sup>20</sup>. Details will be found in the Bibliography section.

I would like to end this Introduction by expressing my profound gratitude to Prof. Dr. Domingo Ramos-Lissón for his help, advice and guidance at all times in directing my studies.





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3. Cf. *Mt.* 22, 39-40; *Mc.* 12, 28-24; *Lc.* 10, 27-28; *Rom.* 13, 10.
4. *Mt.* 22, 39-40. Cf. *Lc.* 10, 27-28.
5. Cf. *Deut.* 6, 5.
6. *Lev.* 19, 18.
7. Cf. *Mt.* 22, 39.
8. *Mt.* 5, 44.
9. *Io.* 13, 34.
10. 1 *Cor.* 13, 13.
11. SAINT THOMAS AQUINAS, *II-II*, q. 23, a. 6.
12. Cf. 1 *Cor.* 13, 1-3.
13. Cf. SAINT THOMAS AQUINAS, *II-II*, q. 23, a. 8.
14. *Col.* 3, 14.
15. A. D'ALES, *La Théologie de Saint Cyprien* (Paris 1922).
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## ABBREVIATIONS

### 1. *Writings of Saint Cyprian*

Dem.	Ad Demetrium
Don.	Ad Donatum
Epp.	Epistulae
Fort.	Ad Fortunatum
Habit.	De habitu uirginum
Idol.	Quod idola dii non sint
Laps.	De lapsis
Mort.	De mortalitate
Op.	De opere et eleemosynis
Orat.	De dominica oratione
Pat.	De patientia
Quir.	Ad Quirinum (Testimoniorum libri III)
Unit.	De ecclesiae catholicae unitate
Zet.	De zelo et liuore



## 2. *Writings of Tertullian*

Ad martyr.	Ad martyres
Apol.	Apologeticum
Cast.	De exhortatione castitatis
De idol.	De idolatria
De orat.	De oratione
De pat.	De patientia
De praescr.	De praescriptione haereticorum
Scap.	Ad Scapulam

## 3. *Others*

CAMPOS	J. Campos, <i>Obras de San Cipriano</i> (Madrid 1964)
C Chr. SL	<i>Corpus Christianorum. Series Latina</i>
CSEL	<i>Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum</i>
DACL	<i>Dictionnaire d'archéologie chrétienne et de liturgie</i> DS H. DENZINGER - A. SCHÖNMETZER, <i>Enchiridion Symbolorum</i>
DTC	<i>Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique</i>
GER	<i>Gran Enciclopedia Rialp</i>
PG	<i>Patrologia Graeca</i> (Migne)
PL	<i>Patrologia Latina</i> (Migne)







## SAINT CYPRIAN'S IDEAS ON «LOVE THY NEIGHBOUR»

### 1. *Fraternal Charity*

We see in the writings of Tertullian that Christians called themselves brothers<sup>1</sup> and that the love they had for each other was already recognised by the pagans<sup>2</sup>. Saint Cyprian actually calls the Church the «fraternity»<sup>3</sup> and ends many of his letters with the words: «Greet all the brotherhood» or some such similar phrase»<sup>4</sup>.

Saint Cyprian based his teaching mainly on Holy Scripture<sup>5</sup> and in his compilation of scriptural texts we find the reference which he uses in this teaching of brotherly love, i.e., *Jo. 15, 12*: «*This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you*»<sup>6</sup>. The love that we should have for each other is based on Christ's exhortation to his disciples to love one another as He loved them<sup>7</sup>. Christ loved his disciples as a brother, being both kind and gentle, even deigning to wash the feet of his apostles, so that, while He was such a Master to his servants, He might by his example the attitude that a fellow servant ought to have toward his companions and equals<sup>8</sup>.

It is clear from *Act. 4, 32* that the early Christians put into practice Our Lord's teachings since they «acted with one soul and mind: nor was there among them any distinction, neither did they esteem as their own anything of the possessions that they had; but all things were common to them»<sup>9</sup>. Their good works were as abundant as was their unity in love<sup>10</sup>.

This brotherly affection is also based on a common fatherhood, that the one God created us and He is the one Father of us all<sup>11</sup>, and Saint Cyprian emphasises our common nature in his remarks to Demetrian on the latter's harsh treatment of his servants: «You both have the same lot as to being born, one condition as to dying, identical material bodies, a common order of soul»<sup>12</sup>. Later in the same treatise, our author turns to love that Christians have for their persecutors and enemies. We may not hate and are thus more pleasing to God, nor do we return injury, in fact we repay hatred with kindness<sup>13</sup>.

A clear trait of this fraternal charity is its spiritual nature. It is something of the heart, of the spirit. Writing to imprisoned confessors, Saint Cyprian says:

«We, too, are in a certain way there with you in prison; we believe that we who cling so firmly to your hearts feel with you the distinctions of divine condescension. Your indivisible love joins us to your honour; the spirit does not allow love to be separated»<sup>14</sup>.

Thus this love transcends distance<sup>15</sup> and the resulting union allows us to share in another's glory or sufferings<sup>16</sup>.

We will now consider some of the more external manifestations of fraternal charity. In A.D. 253, Pope Cornelius was banished by the Emperor Gallus<sup>17</sup>. In a letter to the Pope, Saint Cyprian relates Cornelius's confession of faith to his inseparable love of the brethren<sup>18</sup>.

Fraternal correction, too, is a sign of charity. God chastises and corrects those He loves. Thus correction by one of the brethren and particularly by priests is not a sign of hatred but of love<sup>19</sup> and leads a fellow brother on to salvation<sup>20</sup>.

Another result of the love we have for each other is that someone dies we should rejoice, rather than be sorrowful because that soul is going to the joy of eternal salvation<sup>21</sup>. The culmination of our love for each other is when we ourselves die. We are going to embrace our dear ones who have already gone to heaven. We look upon the patriarchs as our parents whom we hasten to greet. Parents, brothers, children and a large multitude wait for us

and long for us, being anxious for our salvation. It will be a great joy for them and for us to come into their sight and embrace<sup>22</sup>. Thus does Saint Cyprian see this mutual love among faithful extending throughout the earth and including all the souls in heaven, which is, in essence, a view of the Communion of Saints<sup>23</sup>.

We could conclude this section by reflecting that our brotherly love is founded on the fact that we are all God's creatures, that we have a common Father, God Himself, and that Our Lord specifically commanded us to love one another.

## 2. *Spiritual works of mercy*

Saint Cyprian had great concern for the distress of others. His sensitive heart grieved for the problems of his fellowman, whether spiritual or corporal, i.e., he had in his soul the virtue of pity, or mercy<sup>24</sup>. This internal pity could not but be expressed externally in his writings and his action, encouraging his flock to put charity into action. These acts of charity to one's neighbour, derived from pity, are the works of mercy. In this section, we will see those works related to the soul of our neighbour (the spiritual works) and in the following section those dealing with the body (the corporal works).

Throughout his writings Saint Cyprian places great emphasis on prayer for one another. This prayer is based directly on our «mutual love» as we see in the letter to Pope Cornelius:

*«... pro caritate mutua qua nobis inuicem cohaeremus ut, ... ieiuniis uigiliis orationibus cum omni plebe non desinamus. ...perseueret apud Dominum nostra dilectio, pro fratribus et sororibus nostris apud misericordiam patris non cesset oratio»<sup>25</sup>.*

Similarly, in a letter to fellow bishops, our author points out that «charity demands» that they pray for all those benefactors who contributed to the redemption of those captured by the Berbers<sup>26</sup>. The «allegiance of love» is shown in the sacrifices and prayers to God that He may guard the Pope (Lucian) and bring to perfection the glorious crown of his confession<sup>27</sup>.

This prayer of Christians should be with one soul like the three children enclosed in the fiery furnace who were united in prayer and in agreement of the spirit or, more so, like the Apostles after the Ascension of Our Lord who, with Our Lady, continued steadfastly in prayer with one mind<sup>28</sup>.

All the brethren should be included in our prayer because we are one people<sup>29</sup> and this has been taught by our Lord<sup>30</sup>. Thus public prayer in the Mass and private prayer is offered day and night for the confessors in prison<sup>31</sup>. The confessors who were exiled and condemned to work in the mines are asked to pray that the confession of all may be achieved and that all may rejoice together in heaven<sup>32</sup>. The intentions of these prayers in general is that all may gain everlasting glory but we also find our saint asking his flock to pray that he and a young reader, Aurelius, newly ordained, may both be returned safely from exile<sup>33</sup>.

The mercy of the Bishop of Carthage is seen clearly in his prayer for the lapsed, that they may be restored to God's grace: «Rogamus uos ut pro uobis Deum rogare possimus, preces ipsas ad uos prius uertimus quibus Deum pro uobis ut misereatur oramus»<sup>34</sup>. And even more so when he urges us to pray for enemies and those that persecute us. His motive again is supernatural. His aim is that the will of God may be accomplished in these malefactors and that they too may begin to be heavenly and reach salvation<sup>35</sup>.

Finally, in the midst of condemning heresies which caused him so much suffering, because God was being offended, we find him praying for the heretics that their hearts may be softened and that their minds may be enlightened so that they seek repentance<sup>36</sup>.

Heresy, however, is a great danger to the souls of the faithful, and Saint Cyprian does not hesitate to counsel the Christians in Rome to avoid being contaminated by such a great evil. This counsel is based on charity<sup>37</sup>. Our author's writings are full of counsels, advices, remonstrations in the correction or prevention of error, whether it is related to unity, the lapsed, the comportment of virgins, the attitude of the pagans, good works, liturgy, etc.<sup>38</sup>. All is based on charity, neither excessive transigence with individuals and their errors which can be converted into a lack of love,



causing harm to the community as a whole nor a stubborn intransigence which would go against fraternal charity, being unwilling to understand the others<sup>39</sup>.

Bearing the faults of others is based on charity which, without patience, will not last: «*tolle sustinendi tolerandique substantiam, et nullus radicibus ac uiribus perseuerat*»<sup>40</sup>. We see this in Saint Cyprian's attitude towards Demetrian, having kept silent, overcoming impatience with patience<sup>41</sup>, and with this same patience overcoming the insults and injuries of a rebellious deacon of the bishop Rogatian<sup>42</sup>.

Not only must we put up with the faults and injuries of others, but we must actually forgive them: «*Forgive us our debts as we also forgive our debtors*» (Mt. 6, 12); «*When you stand to pray, forgive whatever you have against anyone*» (Mc. 11, 25)<sup>43</sup>. Saint Cyprian also refers to forgiving our brother who offends us not only seventy times seven times, but all his offenses without exception (cf. Mt. 18, 21-22), giving the example of Stephen, the Protomartyr, who when being stoned to death by the Jews, asked for forgiveness of his murderers, thus imitating our Lord's patient gentleness<sup>44</sup>.

Compassion and pity for sinners is clearly shown in Saint Cyprian's approach to the forgiveness of the lapsed. Meditating on God's goodness and clemency, we should grieve with those who grieve and weep with those who weep, encouraging the sinners with our solace and our love<sup>45</sup>. We have the example of Our Lord, as our author puts it, leaving the ninety-nine sheep, going after the lost one and carrying it back on his shoulders<sup>46</sup>. The concern for the soul of the lapsed is shown by considering him as a wounded brother lying injured in the line of battle. The devil attempts to kill the man he has wounded. Do we allow the devil to finish him off, passing by our brother lying half dead as did the priest and Levite in the Gospel? Or imitating what Christ taught and did, do we snatch the wounded from the jaws of his adversary? Do we save him cured for God, the Judge?<sup>47</sup>. The medicine of divine goodness and of mercy is not withheld from uplifting the lapsed and from curing the wounded<sup>48</sup>. This forgiveness is imitating the goodness and mercy and love of God the Father himself<sup>49</sup>. The example of the divine clemency and God's

fatherly love are evoked several times to encourage fellow bishops to grant forgiveness to the lapsed who are repentant<sup>50</sup>. Thus we see the spiritual motives in the Saint's attitude and also his close identification with the needs of the people when he writes about his concern that they should not die without peace and in communion with the Church<sup>51</sup> nor that they be deprived of the Eucharist in order to give them strength to sustain them in time of persecution<sup>52</sup>.

The compassion of our Bishop is also brought out in his recommendations for dealing with those Christians who had been seduced into schism by Marcian, who had followed the sect Novatian. Those who repent should be received with prompt and benign humility and the comparison is given of offering these travellers an inn such as the one in the Gospel, in which those wounded and injured by robbers may be received and tended and protected by the innkeeper<sup>53</sup>.

Finally, as an example of Christian charity, we have the letter of encouragement and consolation to the confessors in prison or in exile<sup>54</sup>. Our bishop's whole idea was to praise them, to tell them to persevere, to comfort them in their sorrowful state, letting them know that he was united to them and praying for them—in a word—that he cared. That this attention had its effect and his love recognized was shown by the confessors themselves:

«This special solace has come, in that we have been cheered by the receipt of your letter and have recognized alleviations of the sorrows of our grieving spirit. ... The Lord will bestow a reward upon you for this love of yours and render to you the dire recompense for this so very good work»<sup>55</sup>.

### 3. *The corporal works of mercy*

Saint Cyprian does distinguish clearly between almsgiving, the act of giving money to someone in need, and the corporal works of mercy in general<sup>56</sup>. He sees all these acts as good works, relieving a brother in distress. As usual, he does not give



a theological treatise on works of mercy, but we find him constantly recommending them and, as his wont, having a solid basis on Sacred Scripture. For example, in *Quir.*, his reference book of biblical quotations, we find under the general heading «Of the benefit of good works and mercy» the following quote of *Is.* 58, 7: «*Deal thy bread to the hungry and the needy and harbourless into thy house: when thou shalt see one naked, cover him and despise not thy own flesh*» and of *Job.* 29, 12.13.15.16: «*Because I had delivered the poor man cried out, and the fatherless that had no helper. The mouth of the widow blessed me, since I was the eye of the blind; I was also the foot of the lame and the father of the weak*» and of *Tob.* 2,2: «*And I said to Tobias, my son, go and bring whatever poor man thou shalt find out of our brethren, who still has God in mind with his whole heart. Bring him hither and he shall eat my dinner together whith me.*» Referring to alms in particular he quotes Saint Paul exhorting the Corinthians to send money to the poor in Jerusalem, 2 *Cor.* 8, 14.15: «*Let your abundance supply their want, that their abundance also may be the supplement of your want, that there may be equality: as it written, he who had much had not excess; and he who had little had no lack*»<sup>57</sup>.

With regard to specific works of mercy, we find Saint Cyprian very clear. He sees the plague, which reached Africa in A.D. 252, as a test of whether the sick are cared for<sup>58</sup>. That the sick, in general, are to be visited is evident in his quotations of Scripture<sup>59</sup>.

The confessors in prison had to be cared for whether it related to clothing that they needed or food or expenses in general<sup>60</sup>. This provision of expenses was also intended for the poor so that all their needs and afflictions could be cared for<sup>61</sup>. This care for the poor, so close to the heart of Saint Cyprian, is highlighted in his letters, written in exile, to his flock in Carthage. They should be diligent in caring for the poverty stricken, providing for them in as many ways as possible to relieve their penury<sup>62</sup>. In another letter, written in the same year, apart from referring to the poor, he also requests that the widows, infirm and travellers be looked after, using his own money which he had left with Rogatian<sup>63</sup>.

On account of the Berber raids in Numidia many Christians were held captive. The Bishop of Carthage was very much distressed with the situation, and wrote a moving letter to the Numidian bishops urging them that the captives must be delivered from the hands of the Berbers and redeemed by paying money<sup>64</sup>. The concern for the brethren does not end with their death. Every care and vigilance should be bestowed on the bodies of all the confessors who have died<sup>65</sup>. This care of the dead is referred to more than once with the example given of Tobias who left his dinner to go and bury the dead<sup>66</sup>.

As to how all these good works should be carried out, we know Saint Cyprian's mind on the matter from his quotations which he culled from Sacred Scripture. They should be done immediately, in secret and cheerfully<sup>67</sup>.

All these good works did not spring from some philanthropic feeling to one's fellow man but were based firmly on charity. From the negative point of view the love of God is not in anyone who, having the goods of this world, ignores his brother's needs<sup>68</sup>. But we also see that it was through the *love* of the brethren that came the collections for the needs of the confessors<sup>69</sup>, their maintenance in general<sup>70</sup>, the visits made to them<sup>71</sup>. Saint Cyprian points out how he himself, if able, would carry out «all the duties of love» in relation to the care of the confessors in prison<sup>72</sup> and urges «greater love» in the care for the poor<sup>73</sup>. Finally, the motive for the redemption of captives should be 'not only love' and that these events are to test the «love of our spirit»<sup>74</sup>.

Saint Cyprian quotes *Mt. 5, 42* to show that alms should be given to all<sup>75</sup> and from Pontius we see that good works were extended to all, not only for those of the household of the faith<sup>76</sup>. Nevertheless, there is also a certain order of charity. «Every person ought to have care rather of his own people, and especially of believers»<sup>77</sup>. And our author, in recommending the care of the poor, places those first who «have not left the camp of Christ»<sup>78</sup>.

We now turn to some of the more theological aspects of good works, for example, their salvific power.

The salvation of man has come through Christ's death on the Cross<sup>79</sup>. However, man being weak, continues to sin<sup>80</sup>, and God continues to work for our salvation<sup>81</sup> who, in his divine mercy has pointed out a way to free us from the sins we commit after baptism<sup>82</sup>. One of these means is by way of almsgiving and good works<sup>83</sup>.

Saint Cyprian does not say anything new by pointing out the saving power of almsgiving. He bases his statements on Holy Scripture by referring to *Prov.* 15, 27, *Sir.* 3, 30 and *Lc.* 11, 40.41<sup>84</sup>, comparing the cleansing action of almsgiving with the waters of baptism and saying that purity of heart can also be obtained by the giving of alms<sup>85</sup>.

In this particular context, no distinction is made between mortal and venial sin<sup>86</sup>, but it is clear that Saint Cyprian is speaking of the latter being removed by almsgiving when he says:

«So, most beloved brethren, let us acknowledge the saving gift of divine indulgence by cleansing and purging our sins; let us, who cannot be without some wound of conscience, care for our wounds with spiritual remedies»<sup>87</sup>.

He also quotes *Prov.* 20, 9: «*Who shall boast that he has a pure heart or who shall boast that he is clean from sins?*»<sup>88</sup>; and 1 *Io.* 1, 8: «*If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us*»<sup>89</sup>.

Some men can be free from mortal sin but it is venial sin which is common to all and which can be removed outside the Sacrament of Penance by acts of charity.

There are many examples in the Old Testament where God urges his people to practise works of mercy to obtain pardon for their transgressions. In Chapter 58 of *Isaias*, it is seen that God's anger could only be placated by works of mercy. His people had been charged with their sins for which they could not make satisfaction either with their prayers or even if they rolled in sackcloth and ashes, but only by feeding the poor, hospitality, and the naked<sup>90</sup>.



It is good works that please God<sup>91</sup>, and prayer alone is insufficient. Prayer has to be accompanied by deeds<sup>92</sup> by which, says the Archangel Raphael, our petitions are made efficacious, life is redeemed from dangers and souls are freed from death<sup>93</sup>.

When we have been referring to almsgiving and good works having the power to free us from death, we have been talking about the death of the soul, the second death, but we have the remarkable and miraculous revival after the first death of Tabitha<sup>94</sup>. She died after a life given to good works and the widows, gathered around Saint Peter, showed him the garments they had been given and prayed for the deceased «not by their words but by her own works»<sup>95</sup>. Peter said to the corpse, «*Tabitha, rise up: and she opened her eyes and looked at Peter and sat up on the bed*» (Act. 9, 40), and Saint Cyprian comments:

«So powerful were the merits of mercy, so much did just works prevail! She who had conferred upon suffering widows the assistance for living deserved to be recalled to life by the petition of widows»<sup>96</sup>.

Apart from the above example taken from the New Testament, there are also the words of Our Lord in the Gospel urging us to seek the kingdom of God by ridding ourselves of our possessions. «*Again, the kingdom of heaven is as if a trader were looking for rare pearls: and now he has found one pearl of great cost, and has sold all that he had and bought it*» (Mt. 13, 45-46). Saint Cyprian says that this merchant is «of heavenly grace and a purchaser of eternal salvation»<sup>97</sup>. Our Lord also promises salvation to Zacchaeus who gave half his possessions to the poor<sup>98</sup>.

This leads us on to consider the heavenly rewards in general for those who do good works. The hope for a supernatural reward is not to be condemned as selfish since love for oneself is fully compatible with love for others<sup>99</sup> and Saint Cyprian reminds us of Our Lord's promise that even for a small deed like giving a cup of cold water in the right spirit we shall receive our reward<sup>100</sup>. He also warns those who are more concerned about their wealth that their eternal reward of salvation is in danger<sup>101</sup>, and again when he says, «You save money which, when saved, does not save you»<sup>102</sup>. He urges them to share goods with

Christ so that they may be made co-heirs of his heavenly kingdom<sup>103</sup>. Speaking to the wealthy women he tells them by their good works they can merit God<sup>104</sup>. We also have the impressive passage in the Gospel of Saint Luke about the widow who put two mites, which was all she had, into the treasury of the temple (cf. *Lc.* 21, 2), and Saint Cyprian hints that she has already been saved when he says, «A greatly blessed and glorious woman, who even before the day of judgment merited to be praised by the voice of the Judge»<sup>105</sup>.

Saint Cyprian has some very clear words for those who excuse themselves from giving alms on account of the fact that they have a family to look after. This will be looked at later when we deal with God's providence, but here we can consider what he says to parents in relation to their own salvation and that of their children.

Having referred to the widow and her two mites, Saint Cyprian then goes on to refer to a somewhat similar case Old Testament when, in the time of famine, there was a widow preparing a final meal for herself and her child. Elias asked her to bake something for him to eat first and then use what was left for herself and her son. This she did (cf. *1 Reg.* 17, 12-15). Saint Cyprian comments:

«... and in poverty and hunger food is not considered before mercy, so that while in a saving work life according to the flesh is condemned, the soul spiritually is preserved»<sup>106</sup>.

The more children in the family, the greater also should be the number of good works<sup>107</sup>, because «the souls of many must be freed»<sup>108</sup>. Parents are advised to place their wealth in God's hands, entrusting the inheritance to Him, which is to provide for the future of their children<sup>109</sup>. Saint Cyprian clearly means their eternal future because later we find:

«So you as a father are a transgressor and a betrayer, unless you look out faithfully for the welfare of your children, unless you attend to their salvation with religious and true love»<sup>110</sup>.

Set before the parents is the impressive and thought-provoking example of Tobias who recommended his children to do justice and almsdeeds. God will not turn his face away from those who give alms and do not turn their face from the poor. By almsgiving we store up a good reward and then from the point of view of the salvific effect of giving alms we have, perhaps, the more important phrase from the passage: «alms delivers from death and does not suffer one to go into darkness»<sup>111</sup>.

Another example is that of the *munerarius*, a man of ambition who spends a fortune presenting a spectacle of gladiators etc., expecting some honour and receiving the temporary acclamation of the crowd; whereas the glory of the almsgiver is greater and is presented with eternal life and «the everlasting reward of the heavenly kingdom is received»<sup>112</sup>.

The promise eternal life to those who give alms is put into the mouth of the devil when an imaginary contest is presented between Satan and Christ<sup>113</sup>. Saint Cyprian quotes in full *Mt.* 25, 31-46: «... *for I was hungry and you gave me to eat...*», introducing the quotation by reminding us that the Lord promises a reward to those who give alms<sup>114</sup> and that the just who have carried out the corporal works of mercy will receive everlasting life<sup>115</sup>.

In a glowing piece of rhetoric, we are encouraged to continual good works exchanging earthly goods for those heaven:

«Let us give worldly food and drink that together with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob we may come to the heavenly banquet. Lest we reap little, let us sow very much. While there is time, let us take thought for security and eternal salvation»<sup>116</sup>.

He then quotes Saint Paul: «*And in doing let us not grow tired, for in due time we shall reap*»<sup>117</sup>, and goes on to give the example of the early Christians who sold their property giving the proceeds to the Apostles for distribution among the poor, «transferring their estates there where they might receive the fruits of an eternal possession, there preparing homes where they might begin to live always»<sup>118</sup>. In fact, in a description of heaven, we find the merciful, who have performed good works, already there



enjoying their reward having transferred their earthly patrimony to the treasures of heaven<sup>119</sup>.

A summary of Saint Cyprian's thoughts on the rewards for those who do good works is given in his own words when he considers what will be the glory of the charitable. The Lord will distribute the rewards for our works, grant heavenly things for the earthly, everlasting for the temporal, great for the small. The Lord will never fail to give a reward for our merits. «In peace He will give to those who conquer, a white crown for their good works; in persecution He will give a second crown, a purple one, for our passion»<sup>120</sup>.

It is interesting to note the reference in the same passage to «God as our debtor». Saint Cyprian makes a similar statement earlier: «For if by almsgiving to the poor, God is made our debtor»<sup>121</sup>.

In the strict sense, of course, God does not owe us anything, yet He is true to His promises and one could think that Saint Cyprian had in mind the promise of Our Lord when in some way He made Himself our debtor by saying, «*Blessed are the merciful for they shall obtain mercy*»<sup>122</sup>.

Having considered the heavenly rewards promised to those who are generous in almsgiving and good works, we now deal with the rewards given in this life to those who live the virtue of charity in this practical way.

Saint Cyprian first refers to this aspect when he endeavours to allay the fears of those who are concerned about ending up in poverty by being generous<sup>123</sup>.

He puts their minds at ease and reminds them of God's promise in the Old Testament:

*«He that giveth to the poor shall never be in want: but he that turns away his eyes shall be in great want, showing that the merciful and those who do good can never be in want, that rather the sparing and the sterile later come to want»*<sup>124</sup>.

He then turns to the New Testament quoting Saint Paul<sup>125</sup>, and commenting that the wealth of him who does good

is increased by the retribution of God, while the action of thanksgiving is directed to God by the prayer of the poor for our almsgiving and good works<sup>126</sup>.

Saint Cyprian, as expected, could not fail to leave out Christ's own words which portray the paternal care of God for his children:

*«Be not anxious, saying: «What shall we eat or what shall we drink or what shall we put on?» For after all these things the gentiles seek. For your Father knows that you have need of these things. But seek first the kingdom and justice of God, and all these things shall be added to you. All things are added and given over to those who seek the kingdom and the justice of God»*<sup>127</sup>.

This message is reinforced for those who lack the courage to be generous<sup>128</sup> giving the examples of Elias being fed in the desert by ravens and Daniel Being fed in the lions' den<sup>129</sup>. A further reminder of God's solicitude for us is found in our Lord's words: *«Look at the birds they do not sow or reap, or gather into barns; yet your heavenly father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?»* Nothing will be lacking to a Christian, to a servant of God, to one devoted to good works, to one dear to the Lord<sup>130</sup>.

Those who lack faith in God's Providence are strongly reprovéd<sup>131</sup>, and are compared to the Pharisees who were fond of money<sup>132</sup>.

We have two further examples of God's generosity which have already been referred to. First of all, we have the miracle in the First Book of Kings. The widow who fed Elias was rewarded most generously. For her good works God ensured that food would not be lacking<sup>133</sup>. Then we have that striking case of Tabitha when it was not the material means of supporting life that was given, but life itself<sup>134</sup>, through her just works and the petition of widows<sup>135</sup>.

Apart from these commonly accepted material rewards, Saint Cyprian edifies us by giving the unexpected example of suffering as a reward. In a letter to the confessors in the mines of Sigua,

he extols their punishments, their beatings with rods, their chains, their filthy conditions, their lack of food and clothing. Our Lord has drawn them to this sublime height of glory because of, among other things, their vigilance in aiding the exhausted and mercy in cherishing the poor<sup>136</sup>.

Also speaking to Demetrian he says that even though there is a bad harvest of grapes and olives and there is drought in the land, all this matters but little to a Christian. They always in the Lord and rejoice and are happy in their God and bravely endure the evils and adversities of the world, while they look forward to the blessings and prosperity of the future<sup>137</sup>.

One of the consequences of confidence in God as a loving Father, relying on Him for all our needs, being detached from the things of this world, is generosity in almsgiving. Saint Cyprian accepts no half-measures in this; he exhorts total detachment, saying that Our Lord has commanded us not to depend on earthly possessions<sup>138</sup>, going on to quote *Lc. 12, 33*: «*Sell, he says, your possessions, and give alms*»<sup>139</sup>. Our treasure should be stored in heaven, not on earth<sup>140</sup>. We have come into the world with nothing and can take nothing out. Therefore, having food and clothing, we should be content<sup>141</sup>.

Those rich people who came to Holy Mass without an offering are admonished severely by Saint Cyprian<sup>142</sup> who gives the example of the poor widow who gave all she had<sup>143</sup>, thus giving a lesson to the rich and at the same time indicating that the poor are not exempt from being generous nor from living the virtue of poverty<sup>144</sup>.

The essence of the virtue of poverty consists in living a spirit of detachment from the things of this world —material goods and creatures— and Saint Cyprian brings this home when he begins to deal with those who excuse themselves from almsgiving on account of being concerned for their children's welfare<sup>145</sup>, quoting *Mt. 10, 37*: «*He who loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and he who loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me*»<sup>146</sup> and also Saint John in the following passage:

«For if we love God with our whole heart, we should prefer neither parents nor children to God. This



also John lays down in his epistle, that there is no love of God in those whom we see unwilling to do good to the poor. He says: «*He who has the goods of this world and sees his brother in need and closes his heart to him, how does the love of God abide in him?*»<sup>147</sup>

The teaching of Saint Cyprian is abundantly clear. God comes first<sup>148</sup> and it is in this context of parent's misplaced concern for their children that the example of the widow helping Elias is introduced. She did not put her children before Elias in the time of famine and want. She pleased God by her generosity. In the midst of poverty and hunger, food was not considered before mercy<sup>149</sup>. The fact that she did this not knowing the teaching of Christ places greater responsibility on those who have heard his precepts<sup>150</sup>.

Saint Cyprian has an interesting comment on the widow's action: «Nor did the mother deprive her children of what she gave Elias, but rather she conferred upon her children what she did kindly and piously»<sup>151</sup>, which immediately precedes his thought-provoking words to those who excuse themselves from good works on account of having a large family<sup>152</sup>. Instead of conferring immunity from giving alms there is, on the contrary, says Saint Cyprian, an even greater obligation to perform good works<sup>153</sup>, reasoning that, being the father of many pledges, there are more for whom one must beseech the Lord<sup>154</sup> and giving the example of Job, who offered sacrifices to God for each of his children, providing the lesson of showing love for one's children by commending them to God through the performance of good works<sup>155</sup>.

Parents should entrust their children to God<sup>156</sup> and also their patrimony<sup>157</sup>, these being examples of complete detachment and trust in God borne out by Saint Cyprian when he quotes Ps. 36, 25-26: «*I have been younger and I have grown old, and I have not seen the just man forsaken nor his seed begging bread. All the day he shows mercy and lends, and his seed shall be blessed*»<sup>158</sup>, and Prov. 20, 7: «*He who lives without reproach in justice shall leave behind him blessed children*»<sup>159</sup>.

Being the good orator that he is and a pastor of souls, he softens when he commends parents to act like Tobias towards their children, giving them the advice he gave to his son<sup>160</sup>, quoting *Tob. 4, 8-9*: «*As you have, my son, so give: if you have an abundant supply, give alms the more from that. If you have a little, give a share from that little*»<sup>161</sup>.

As usual, Saint Cyprian changes his tone to one of encouragement, urging his people to turn towards God rather than the world's goods<sup>162</sup> giving the reminder of the early Christians who sold their homes and estates, offering the proceeds to the Apostles for distribution among the poor<sup>163</sup>. Such was their abundance in good works as was their unity of love. They acted with one soul and with one mind, with no discrimination among them and having all things in common<sup>164</sup>. This similar example is given to the lapsed saying that the rich man who is detached would follow the Lord, loosed and free, as the Apostles and many in apostolic times, and some others often did, who abandoning their possessions and their parents, cling to the undivided ties of Christ<sup>165</sup>. Saint Cyprian, who had remained celibate, is giving us a glimpse of what he had done and why he had done it: to be completely united to Christ and to be completely free to carry out the will of God<sup>166</sup>. The rewards are great, in this world and we will have life everlasting in the world to come<sup>167</sup>.

In writing to his friend Donatus, the Bishop of Carthage extols this utter detachment, urging us to seek that peace and security in the harbour of the port of salvation, raising our eyes from earth to heaven, being above the things of the world<sup>168</sup>. Whom God will make rich, no one will make poor. There can be no want when once the celestial food has filled our breast. Ceilings enriched with gold and houses decorated with precious marble will seem of no account when we realize that we, ourselves, are to be cherished more where the Holy Spirit lives within us. This house will never fall into ruin. On the other hand, that which has been falsely beautified will perish, and that which has no true reality of possession offers no stable security to those who possess it<sup>169</sup>.

The Bishop's pastoral concern to give his flock a clear lesson in detachment is completed when he says we should all run in



the contest of justice as God and Christ look on and, having begun to be grater than this life and this world, let us not slacken our course by a desire for this life or this world<sup>170</sup>.

It should be noted at this stage that those who have riches are not condemned as such. As we have already seen, Zachaeus, who was a rich man, was granted salvation because he shared his goods. But he still remained rich<sup>171</sup>.

Riches in themselves are neither a good nor an evil. They are only means to an end; and as such they can bring great good or great evil to their owner<sup>172</sup>. The rich among the early Christians came to the aid of the poor and both always stayed together<sup>173</sup>. Also the help was given «if they wish»<sup>174</sup>, showing that there was complete freedom and that it depended on their generosity. A summary of Saint Cyprian's thoughts on riches is found in his words to the virgins who are wealthy. They should use their wealth for their salvation and good works. The poor should feel the wealth of the rich. A large patrimony is only a temptation if the income is not devoted to good purposes<sup>175</sup>.

We now consider the supernatural motive of good works. The Christian way of life is personal union with God, union of heart and union of soul. Thus all our actions should be directed to Him. The virtue of charity in relation to our neighbour entails loving him for God's sake. A religious motive is by far superior to any motive arising from a purely disinterested love or feeling of philanthropy. Men do nothing without a motive; and if this motive is a religious one, the entire act becomes permeated by it and is raised to the supernatural level.

A merely impulsive feeling or simple pity is not sufficient. Human emotions are very fickle; and if motives are not built on firmer ground, they do not accomplish the desired effects<sup>176</sup>. The most important aspect of almsgiving is the internal act<sup>177</sup>.

Saint Cyprian never refers explicitly to rectitude of intention when one gives alms, or to having the right motive when performing good works. Nevertheless, the theme is clearly highlighted throughout his writings in the course of which he brings out the supernatural aspect of almsgiving.

We have first to seek the kingdom and the justice of God<sup>178</sup>, acting in such a way as to please Him. Saint Cyprian ascribes this motive to the action of the widow helping Elias<sup>179</sup> and also to the other widow who put the two mites into the treasury. He quotes Our Lord who said that her offering had been made to God<sup>180</sup>, and comments:

«And that we may understand that these works are given to God and that the, whoever does this, deserves well of God, Christ calls this «Gifts of God» and points out that the widow has placed two mites among the gifts of God, that it can be more and more manifest that he who pities the poor lends to God»<sup>181</sup>.

Saint Cyprian here points out that when Christ calls the widow's mite a «gift of God», he means that the physical donation has been given to the Temple treasury, but that the act of almsgiving does not end with the mere transfer of ownership of the goods offered. Because the donation is a consequence of charity and mercy —«he who pities the poor»— God Himself receives the gift, and He —the source of all richness, all good— considers the alms to be on loan: the almsgiver «lends» to God. This «loan» will be repaid amply because the almsgiver enjoys the good favour of God.

Almsgiving is linked with this fact of its being pleasing to God —it wins his good favour— and we remember Tobias telling his sons to serve God in truth, doing what pleases Him and to tell their children to do justice and almsdeeds<sup>182</sup>. In a more direct reference to the motive, he quotes: «*Alms provides a great confidence for all who do it before the most high God*»<sup>183</sup>, and as regards the sacrifices which Abel and Cain first offered, God did not look upon their gifts but upon their hearts, so that he who pleased Him in his heart pleased Him in his gift<sup>184</sup>.

In a similar way, there is a relationship between the sacrifices of Job, offered to God for his children<sup>185</sup> and the good works performed by those who want to commend their own children to God<sup>186</sup>.

When encouraging his people to give alms, Saint Cyprian does not restrict himself to the material side but talks about gi-

ving to God<sup>187</sup>, and saying, «For by almsgiving to the poor, God is «made our debtor»»<sup>188</sup>. Once more, he uses the analogy of alms as a loan made to a heavenly debtor: when the goods change hands, they are lost forever to the almsgiver, but God considers Himself indebted to the person who has exercised this act of charity and mercy. Some give gifts to curry favour at court, and make sure that all the nobles and courtiers are aware of the sumptuous gifts offered; the alms, given in silence, have as their spectators God and the heavenly court of angels<sup>189</sup>.

As a result of this indebtedness, God listens to those prayers that are accompanied by good works. Cornelius, the centurion, who performed many good works and who often prayed was told, «*Cornelius, your prayers and your alms have gone up for a memorial before God*»<sup>190</sup>. For similar reasons the prayers of Tobias were heard and we are told that all who carry out corporal works of mercy and who pray to the Lord, He will hear them and say, «Here I am»<sup>191</sup>.

We also see that the fact of the early Christians sharing their goods was not just a material distribution<sup>192</sup>. In this way they imitated God the Father<sup>193</sup> and became children of God<sup>194</sup>.

With regard to raising the material act of giving to the supernatural level we have Christ's own words: «*Why, if anyone gives you a cup of water to drink in my name, because you are Christ's. I promise you, he shall not miss his reward*» (Mc. 9, 40), and Saint Cyprian often reminds his listeners of this fact<sup>195</sup>.

The theme is developed when he alludes to Christ being fed when the poor are fed<sup>196</sup>, and, departing entirely from the material side of giving, he says, «since in spiritual contributions we should consider Christ who has professed that He receives them»<sup>197</sup>. If the gift of alms is reckoned by God as a loan made to Him, here it is Christ who is represented as having received the loan. The simple act of giving material goods has little transcendence; the good work itself, considered in its materiality, has a very temporary nature. But, if the same action is done in the service of Christ, it is He who «receives» the «loan», and the effect is everlasting<sup>198</sup>.



It is interesting to note Saint Cyprian's comments on the event when Elias is fed by the widow. He says that Elias plays the part of Christ<sup>99</sup>, and, referring to the widow's action, adds: «She did not, as one redeemed by His cross and His passion, repay food and drink for His blood»<sup>200</sup>, pointing out very clearly his opinion that good works in some way are a means of reparation for Christ's death on the Cross<sup>201</sup>. The «loan» which we make to Christ, and which is «received» by Him when we give alms, is here seen in a rather different perspective. The overall balance of payments is very much in favour of Our Lord, who has redeemed us, bought us at a great price, the price of his Precious Blood, shed for our sins. The loan received by Christ is here considered as an act of reparation, a small —but real— contribution made towards the price of our redemption. And when the loan is repaid, it will be paid out of the treasury of merits won for us on the Cross.

The relationship between good works done for the poor and their being done for Christ is brought out in the striking metaphor of the confrontation of Christ by Satan who says, «There among your poor You are clothed and You are fed»<sup>202</sup>. Moreover, we have the full quotation of *Mt.* 25, 31-46, with Christ in his majesty separating the sheep from the goats; those who performed the corporal works of mercy are told: «*Amen I say to you, as long as you did it for one of these, the least of my brethren, you did it for me*» (*Mt.* 25, 40). What greater declaration could Christ have made to us? How more could He have stimulated the works of our justice and mercy than by having said that whatever is offered to the poor and the needy is offered to Him, and by having said that He is offended unless offering is made to the needy and the poor? So that he in the Church who is not moved by consideration of his brother may indeed be moved by contemplation of Christ, and he who does not give thought to his fellow servant in trouble and in need may indeed give thought to the Lord abiding in that very one whom he despises<sup>203</sup>.

Saint Cyprian here moves his flock to raise up their eyes and contemplate the supernatural realities which lie behind the distress of the needy. Although one may not be moved to compassion by the sorry state of one's brother, of one's fellow servant

in distress, the contemplation of Christ will break the hard crust of his indifference. Too much familiarity with the distress of one's neighbour, encouraged perhaps by some petty grudge one has against him, may blind us to his needs, and stem the flow of charity, the flow of alms. But the contemplation of Christ, the innocent victim, will move the hard heart, and the fact that Christ dwells in the needy neighbour will stimulate the act of charity. Thus it is that when exhorting the faithful to good works, Saint Cyprian does not limit himself to saying that they should give to the poor, but that they should give to Christ<sup>204</sup>, sharing their gains with Him and making Him a partner in their earthly possessions<sup>205</sup>. And he counsels the rich to buy from Christ «gold that has been tried by fire»<sup>206</sup>.

In the Sacrament of Baptism we have put on Christ; the Bishop of Carthage, encouraging the ransoming of captured Christians, says that because of this common Baptism, Christ must be contemplated in them: It is Christ, who redeemed us from the danger of death, who must be redeemed from the danger of captivity. It is He, who delivered us from the jaws of the devil, who remains and dwells among us, who redeemed us by the Cross and Blood, must be delivered from the hands of the barbarians and be ransomed<sup>207</sup>.

This insistence on the supernatural attitude to good works reminds us of, and could be summed up in, the words of Saint Paul: «*I may give away all that I have to feed the poor; I may give myself up to be burnt at the stake; if I lack charity, it goes for nothing*» (1 Cor. 13, 3).

I would almost seem superfluous at this stage to go into the question of whether Saint Cyprian considered almsgiving and good works as an obligation or merely as a counsel. Even as a heading in his collection of scriptural quotations he has the following: «That it is of small account to be baptised and to receive the Eucharist unless one profit by it both in deeds and works»<sup>208</sup>.

Thus the theory of *sola fides* is ruled out from the very beginning<sup>209</sup>.

As usual, he speaks with authority, basing his reasons firmly on Sacred Scripture:



«Finally, most beloved brethren, never has the divine admonition failed and been silent in the Old as well as the New Testament in always and everywhere urging the people of God to works of mercy, and, as the Holy Spirit prophesies and exhorts, in ordering everyone, who is being instructed unto hope of the heavenly kingdom, to practise almsgiving»<sup>210</sup>,

quoting *Is.* 58, 6 about feeding the hungry, sheltering the homeless and clothing the naked<sup>211</sup>.

Thus we see the introduction of the words «admonition» and «ordering». Also in relation to almsgiving we frequently see the word «precept». He who gives alms according to the precept of God believes in God<sup>212</sup>. It is said of the widow in the Gospel who put the two mites into the treasury that she was «mindful of the heavenly precepts»<sup>213</sup>, and following on the words of Our Lord praising this action, Saint Cyprian deduces that even thought people are poor, they too have the responsibility of giving alms<sup>214</sup>. And of the other widow in the Old Testament who was kind to Elias, it is said in praise of her and as an example to others, that she had not yet heard Christ's precepts<sup>215</sup>. The words of Tobias to his son are quoted, these being used, in a sense, to link the commandments of God with the giving of alms<sup>216</sup>.

Quoting Our Lord's words «Sell your possessions and give alms» (*Lc.* 12, 33) and «*Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth*» (*Mt.* 6, 19), Saint Cyprian comments:

«Thus in the Gospel the Lord, the Teacher of our life and Master of eternal salvation, quickening the populace of believers, and providing for them when quickened, among His divine mandates and heavenly precepts, commands and prescribes nothing more frequently than that we continue in almsgiving»<sup>217</sup>.

The obligation to practise almsgiving is most clearly underlined: apart from quoting the imperatives of the Holy Scripture, Saint Cyprian, in the above passages, has used the words «mandate», «precept», «command», «prescribe», «admonition», «ordering», «urging», and «exhort». It would be difficult to find a clearer or

more insistent statement of the obligation which the Christian has of practising almsgiving.

Apart from the direct references to the commands of God we also have the effects of not putting into practice the virtue of charity in relation to one's neighbour and from these we can deduce the obligation.

He sins who places himself and his children before Christ, not sharing his wealth with the poor<sup>218</sup> and that the father sins twice and commits a twofold crime because he does not put his children into God's care by giving alms and also because he teaches them to love their patrimony more than Christ<sup>219</sup>. Such a parent has failed to put his goods to their proper use, and commits a second sin by scandalizing his own children, who will learn from his bad example to put God in second place.

Sin is basically an offence against God and with Our Lord's words *«Amen, I say to you, as long as you did not do it for one of these least ones, you did not do it for me»* (Mt. 25, 45), we see that He is offended unless offering is made to the needy and the poor<sup>220</sup>. Failing to give alms—ignoring the obligation of which Saint Cyprian so insistently reminds his flock—is, quite simply, a sin of omission.

Furthermore, from what Saint John lays down in his Epistle: *«He who has the goods of this world and sees his brother in need and closes his heart to him, how does the love of God abide in him?»* (1 Jo. 3, 17), we see that there is no love of God in those who are unwilling to do good to the poor<sup>221</sup>.

The obligation is further reflected in the alienation from God of those who fail to live the virtue of charity. God will not listen to the prayers of those who ignore the needs of the unfortunate: in refusing to hear the pleas of the needy, in being unmerciful towards them, many cut themselves off from the fountain of the divine mercy<sup>222</sup>.

Thus as we have already said, although Saint Cyprian does not refer expressly to the obligation of doing good works, nevertheless, from what he does say, it is clear that he did consider it a grave obligation<sup>223</sup>.

Saint Cyprian's faith was practical, equally far from the false mysticism which praises faith without works, and from the ratio-

nalism which dismisses faith. This was the programme of Christianity from Saint Paul (*Gal.* 5.6: «... *faith that works by charity*»), and such is the teaching of the Bishop of Carthage<sup>224</sup>.

#### 4. CONCLUSIONS

Saint Cyprian saw the Church as fraternity, a union of brothers, based on Our Lord's command to love one another and that God is the one Father of us all. It is in heaven where the culmination of this love will be achieved. Saint Cyprian sees this charity extending throughout the earth and including the souls in heaven which is, in essence, a view of the Communion of Saints. Fraternal charity leads the faithful to pray for each other, whether it is for all the brethren because they are one people, or for benefactors, or those suffering in any way, or the lapsed. Also to be included in the prayers are the persecutors and heretics, but for supernatural motives; that in the former the will of God may be accomplished in that they reach salvation and that the latter may be moved to seek repentance. Love for one's neighbour leads to fraternal correction, helping a fellow brother on to eternal salvation. The Christian will bear patiently the faults of others and forgive injuries, imitating the example of Christ. Those who had lapsed in times of persecution and who were repentant were to be given all the help necessary that they might die in peace and in communion with the Church.

The love of one's neighbour embraces the whole person, thus there will be concern for his physical necessities. Corporal good works should be extended to all, including pagans, but there is a certain order in this charity. Those placed first are the household of the faith. These good works did not spring from simple altruism or some merely philanthropic feeling towards one's fellow man. They were based firmly on supernatural foundations. Good works have a salvific power for those who carry them out. God, in his mercy, has shown us that almsgiving is a means to wash away venial sins. Prayer alone is insufficient to please God; it must be accompanied by good works and these merit a heavenly reward.

1. TERTULLIAN, *Apol.* 39, 8 (C Chr. SL I, 151): «Sed et quod fratrum appellatione censemur».
2. TERTULLIAN, *Apol.* 39, 7 (C Chr. SL I, 151): «Vide, inquiunt, ut inuicem se diligant».
3. *Ep.* 18, I, 1 (CAMPOS, 422): «fraternitatis nostrae»; *Ep.* 20, II, 1 (CAMPOS, 426): «uniuersae fraternitati»; *Ep.* 41, I, 1 (CAMPOS, 486): «uniuersam fraternitatem nostram».
4. Cf. *Epp.* 5, II, 1; 7, I, 1; 11, VIII, etc. (CAMPOS, 378; 384; 400). For a study of the use of the words «frater» and «fraternitas» in Saint Cyprian see H. PÉTRÉ, *Caritas. Étude sur le vocabulaire latin de la charité chrétienne* (Louvain 1948).
5. Cf. A. D'ALES, *La théologie de Saint Cyprien* (Paris 1922) pp. 37-40.
6. *Quir.* 3 (C Chr. SL III, 89).
7. *Zel.* 12 (C Chr. SL IIIA, 81-82): «Quid uero insinuauit crebrius discipulis suis Dominus, quid inter monita salutaria et praecepta caelestia custodiendum magis seruandumque mandauit quam ut eadem dilectione qua discipulos ipse dilexit nos quoque inuicem diligamus?»
8. *Pat.* 6 (C Chr. SL IIIA, 121): «Discipulis non ut seruis dominica potestate praefuit, sed benignus et mitis fraterna eos caritate dilexit, dignatus etiam pedes apostolorum lauare, ut dum circa seruos talis est dominus, exemplo suo doceret qualis circa compares et aequales debeat esse conseruus».
9. *Quir.* 3 (C Chr. SL III, 91); *Op.* 25 (C Chr. SL IIIA, 71).
10. *Op.* 25 (C Chr. SL IIIA, 71): «Talis tunc fuit in operationibus cumulus qualis in delectione consensus».
11. Cf. *Mal.* 2, 10; *Quir.* 3 (C Chr. SL III, 89).
12. *Dem.* 8 (C Chr. SL IIIA, 39): «et cum sit uobis eadem sors nascendi, conditio una moriendi, corporum materia consimilis, animarum ratio communis».
13. *Dem.* 25 (C Chr. SL IIIA, 50): «Et quia odisse non licet nobis et sic Deo plus placemus, dum nullam pro iniuria uicem reddimus. (...) Odiis uestris beniuolentiam reddimus et pro tormentis ac suppliciis quae nobis inferuntur salutis itinera monstramus».

Again Saint Cyprian is repeating what he has learned from the Gospels as is found in his other writings e.g., *Quir.* 49 (C Chr. SL III, 138): «*Si dili-*



- tis qui uos diligunt, quae est uobis gratia? Et peccatores enim diligunt eos qui se diligunt» (Lc. 6, 32)... «Ego autem dico uobis: diligite inimicos uestros et orate pro his qui uos persecuntur» (Mt. 5, 44). Cf. Zel. 15 (C Chr. SL IIIA, 84). The same rule is found in Tertullian's open letter to the pagan officials of the Roman Empire, *Apol.* 36, 4 (C Chr. SL I, 147): «Iidem sumus imperatoribus ex ipso, qui et unicis nostris. Male enim uelle, male facere, male dicere, male cogitare de quoquam ex aequo uetamur», and in his letter to Scapula, governor of proconsular Africa between 211 and 213, *Scap.* 1, 3 (C Chr. SL II, 1127): «Amicos enim diligere omnium est, inimicos autem solorum christianorum».*
14. *Ep.* 37, I, 2 (CAMPOS, 474): «Vobiscum illic in carcere quodam modo et nos sumus, diuinae dignationis ornamenta uobiscum sentire nos credimus qui sic uestris cordibus adhaeremus. Honori nos uestro caritas uestra indiuidua conecit, separari dilectionem spiritus non sinit».
  15. *Ep.* 76, I, 1 (CAMPOS, 726): «Ad uos etiamsi corpore et gressu uenire non datur, dilectione tamen et spiritu uenio».
  16. *Ibidem*: «Quo in istis iurtutibus et laudibus uestris laetus exulto, participem me computans uobis, etsi non passione corporis, consortio caritatis».
  17. Cf. M. M. SAGE, *Cyprian*, «Patristic Monograph Series», I (Cambridge, Mass. 1975) p. 285.
  18. Cf. *Ep.* 60, I, 2 (CAMPOS, 588).
  19. *Habit.* 1 (CAMPOS, 122): «Fili, ne neglexeris disciplinam Dei, nec defeceris ab eo correptus; quem enim diligit Deus corripit» (Prov. 3, 11). Si autem Deus quem diligit corripit et ad hoc corripit ut emendet, fratres quoque, et maxime sacerdotes, non oderunt sed diligunt eos quos corripiunt ut emendent».
  20. *Laps.* 14 (C Chr. SL III, 228): «At qui consiliis fortioribus redarguit simul adque instruit, fratrem promouet ad salutem».
  21. Cf. *Mort.* 7 (C Chr. SL IIIA, 20).
  22. *Mort.* 26 (C Chr. SL IIIA, 31): «Quis non ad suos nauigare festinans uentum prosperum cupidius optet, ut uelociter caros liceat amplecti? Patriam nos nostram paradisum computamus, parentes patriarchas habere iam coepimus: quid non properamus et currimus, ut patriam nostram uidere, ut parentes salutare possimus? Magnus illic nos carorum numerus expectat, parentum, fratrum, filiorum frequens nos et copiosa turba desiderat iam de sua incolumitate secunda, adhuc de nostra salute sollicita. Ad horum conspectum et complexum uenire quanta et illis et nobis in commune laetitia est».
  23. For a fuller development of the theology of the Communion of Saints in Saint Cyprian see: G. BARDY, *La théologie de l'Église de saint Irenée au concile de Nicée* (Paris 1947) pp. 210-212 and V. SAXER, *Vie liturgique et quotidienne à Carthage vers le milieu du IIIe siècle: le témoignage de saint Cyprien et de ses contemporains d'Afrique*, (Citta del Vaticano 1969) pp. 33-35.
  24. Cf. *Laps.* 4 (C Chr. SL III, 222-223); *Ep.* 17, I, 1 (CAMPOS, 419-420).



25. *Ep.* 60, V, 1-2 (CAMPOS, 591).
26. *Ep.* 62, IV, 2 (CAMPOS, 598-599): «Ut autem fratres nostros ac sorores, qui ad hoc opus tam necessarium prompte ac libenter operati sunt, ut semper operentur, in mente habeatis orationibus uestris et eis uicem boni operis in sacrificiis et precibus repraesentetis, subdidi nomina singulorum (...) quorum omnium secundum quod fides et caritas exigit in orationibus et precibus uestris meminisse debetis».
27. *Ep.* 61, IV, 2 (CAMPOS, 594-595): «eat repraesentantes uobis per epistulam gaudium nostrum fida obsequia caritatis expromimus, hic quoque in sacrificiis adque in orationibus nostris non cessantes Deo patri et Christo filio eius Domino nostro gratias agere et orare pariter ac petere ut qui perfectus est adque perficiens custodiat et perficiat in uobis confessionis uestrae gloriosam coronam».
28. *Orat.* 8 (C Chr. SL IIIA, 93-94): «Hanc orationis legem seruauerunt tres pueri in camino ignis inclusi consonantes in prece et spiritus consensione concordēs (...). Sic et apostolos cum discipulis post ascensum Domini inuenimus orasse. «*Erant*», inquit, «*perseuerantes omnes unanimes in oratione cum mulieribus et Maria quae fuerat mater Iesu et fratribus eius*» (*Act.* 1, 14). Perseuerabant in oratione unanimes orationis suae et instantiam simul et concordiam declarantes». Cf. *Ep.* 11, III, 1-2 (CAMPOS, 396-397).
29. *Orat.* 8 (C Chr. SL IIIA, 93): «Publica est nobis et communis oratio, et quando oramus, non pro uno sed pro populo toto rogamus, quia totus populus unum sumus».
30. *Ep.* 11, VII, 3 (CAMPOS, 400): «Unusquisque oret Deum, non pro se tantum, sed pro omnibus fratribus, sicut Dominus orare nos docuit, ubi non singulis priuatam precem mandat, sed oratione communi et concordī prece orantes pro omnibus iussit orare». Saint Cyprian bases his teaching on *Mt.* 6, 9, the first words of the «Our Father», that we are all one because we have a common Father, God. Cf. *Orat.* 8 (C Chr. SL IIIA, 93-94).
31. *Ep.* 37, I, 2 (CAMPOS, 474): «Et nos quidem uestri diebus ac noctibus memores, et quando in sacrificiis precem cum pluribus facimus et cum in secessu priuatis precibus oramus».
32. *Ep.* 76, VII, 3 (CAMPOS, 731-732): «Petite impensius et rogate ut confessionem omnium nostrum dignatio diuina consummet, (...) ut qui hic caritatis et pacis uinculo copulati contra haereticorum iniurias et pressuras gentilium simul stetimus pariter in regnis caelestibus gaudeamus».
33. *Ep.* 38, II, 2 (CAMPOS, 479): «Vos orationibus frequenter insistite et preces nostras uestris precibus adiuuate, ut Domini misericordia fauens uobis cito plebi suae et sacerdotem reddat incolumen et martyrem cum sacerdote lectorem».
34. *Laps.* 32 (C Chr. SL III, 239); Cf. *Ep.* 33, I, 2 (CAMPOS, 464).
35. *Orat.* 17 (C Chr. SL IIIA, 100-101): «Potest et sic intellegi, fratres dilectissimi, ut quoniam mandat et monet Dominus etiam inimicos diligere et pro his quoque qui nos persequuntur, orare, petamus et pro illis qui adhuc terreni sunt et necdum caelestes esse coeperunt, ut et circa illos uoluntas Dei

fiat quam Christus hominem conseruando et redintegrando perfecit... ut precem pro omnium salute faciamus, ut quomodo in caelo, id est in nobis, per fidem nostram uoluntas Dei facta est ut essemus e caelo, ita et in terra, hoc est in illis (non) credentibus fiat uoluntas Dei, ut qui adhuc sunt prima natiuitate terreni incipiant esse caelestes ex aqua et spiritu nati». Cf. *Quir.* 49 (C Chr. SL III, 138).

Also in the open letter to Demetrius after relating all the persecutions, tortures, etc., which the Christians have suffered at his hands, Saint Cyprian says in *Dem.* 20 (C Chr. SL IIIA, 47): «pro pace ac salute uestra propitiantes et placantes Deum diebus ac noctibus iugiter atque instanter oramus». On praying for one's enemies see also TERTULLIAN, *De orat.* 3 (C Chr. SL I, 259).

36. *Ep.* 59, XVIII, 3 (CAMPOS, 585): «Oramus ac deprecamur Deum quem prouocare illi et exacerbare non desinunt, ut eorum corda mitescant, ut furore deposito ad sanitatem mentis redeant, ut pectora operta delictorum tenebris, paenitentiae lumen agnoscant». For a general study of prayer in Saint Cyprian with regard to intentions and intercession see SAXER, *o.c.*, pp. 211-213 and pp. 257-259, respectively.
37. Cf. *Ep.* 59, XX, 2 (CAMPOS, 586), especially «tamen ex abundanti uel sollicitudo nostra uel caritas scribere ad uos ista persuasit». Emphasis added.
38. Cf. *Unit., Laps., Habit., Dem., Op., Ep.* 63 (CAMPOS, 599-614). The whole of this letter deals with the doctrine of the Eucharist and, more specifically corrects the error of offering the chalice with water only.
39. M. R. HERMELO, *Transigencia y unidad en San Cipriano* in *Diálogo Ecueménico* 1 (1966) 228: «Si la transigencia con un miembro de la Iglesia va a acarrear un mal a toda la comunidad, la misma caridad exige la intransigencia con ese miembro», and p. 225: «La intransigencia sistemática se opone a la caridad. Quien vive el amor fraternal, muchas veces, por el bien de la paz y la concordia, tendrá que pasar por alto los defectos de sus hermanos».
40. *Pat.* 15 (C Chr. SL IIIA, 127).
41. *Dem.* 2 (C Chr. SL IIIA, 35): «saepe conticui et inpatientem patientia uici».
42. *Ep.* 3, III, 3 (CAMPOS, 371): «optamus et cupimus contumelias et iniurias singulorum clementi patientia uincere».
43. Cf. *Quir.* 22 (C Chr. SL III, 119-120); *Orat.* 22 (C Chr. SL IIIA, 103); *Orat.* 23 (C Chr. SL IIIA, 104).
44. *Pat.* 16 (C Chr. SL IIIA, 127): «Quid deinde, ut non iures neque maledicas, ut tua ablata non repetas, ut accepta alapa et alteram maxillam uerberanti praebeas, ut fratri in te peccanti non tantum septuagies septies sed omnia omnino peccata dimittas, ut diligas inimicos tuos, ut pro aduersariis et persecutoribus precem facias? Poterisne ista perferre nisi patientiae et tolerantiae firmitate? Quod factum uidemus in Stephano, qui cum a Iudaeis ui et lapidibus necaretur, non sibi uindictam sed interfectoribus ueniam postulabat dicens: «Domine, ne statuas illis hoc peccatum» (*Act.* 7, 60). Sic esse oportuit primum martyrem Christi qui martyres secuturos gloriosa morte

praecurrens non tantum praedicator esset dominicae passionis sed et patientissimae lenitatis imitator».

45. *Ep.* 55, XIX, 1 (CAMPOS, 533-534): «Cuius pietatem et clementiam cogitantes, non acerbi adeo nec duri nec in fouendis fratribus inhumani esse debemus, sed dolere cum dolentibus et cum flentibus flere, et eos quantum possumus auxilio et solacio nostrae dilectionis erigere».
46. *Ep.*, 55, XV, 1 (CAMPOS, 531): «et cum Dominus relictis nonaginta nouem sanis unam errantem et lassam quaesierit et inuentam umeris suis ipse portauerit (cf. *Lc.* 15, 4).
47. *Ep.* 55, XIX, 2 (CAMPOS, 534): «Iacet ecce saucius frater ab aduersario in acie vulneratus. Inde diabolus conatur occidere quem uulnerauit, hinc Christus hortatur ne in totum pereat quem redemit. Cui de duobus adistimus, in cuius partibus stamus? Utrumne diabolo fauemus, ut perimat, et semianimem fratrem iacentem, sicut in euangelio sacerdos et leuitae, praeterimus? An uero ut sacerdotes Dei et Christi, quod Christus et docuit et fecit imitantes, uulneratum de aduersarii faucibus rapimus, hunc curatum Deo iudici reseruamus?».
48. *Ep.* 68, I, 2 (CAMPOS, 641): «ut tamen lapsis erigendis et curandis uulneratis bonitatis et misericordiae diuinae medicinam non denegemus».
49. Cf. *Ep.* 55, XXIII, 1-3 (CAMPOS, 537-538).
50. Cf. *Epp.* 55, XXIX, 1; 56, II, 1; 57, I, 1; 57, V, 1 (CAMPOS, 543; 545; 547; 551).
51. Cf. *Epp.* 57, IV, 3; 68, I, 1 (CAMPOS 550; 641).
52. *Ep.* 57, II, 2 (CAMPOS, 548): «At uero nunc non infirmis sed fortibus pax necessaria est, nec morientibus sed uiuentibus communicatio a nobis danda est, ut quos excitamus et hortamur ad proelium non inermes et nudos relinquamus, sed protectione sanguinis et corporis Christi muniamus, et cum ad hoc fiat eucharistia ut possit accipientibus esse tutela, quos tutos esse contra aduersarium uolumus, munimento dominicae saturitatis armemus». See also *ibidem*, IV, 2 (CAMPOS, 550).
53. *Ep.* 68, III, 4 (CAMPOS, 643): «ut fratres nostros qui uitae Marciani scopulis petunt ecclesiae portus salutes suscipiamus ad nos prompta et benigna humanitate et stabulum comitantibus praebeamus tale quale est in euangelio, quo a latronibus sauciati et uulnerati suscipi t foueri et tutari ab stabulario possint».
54. Cf. *Epp.* 6; 10; 13; 28, etc. (CAMPOS, 379-383; 389-394; 404-408; 412-415; 443-445).
55. *Ep.* 31, I, 1-3 (CAMPOS, 455-456): «hoc praecipuum nobis solacium superuenit quod acceptis litteris tuis erecti sumus et dolentis animi maeroribus fomenta suscepimus. Unde intellegere iam possumus gratiam diuinae prouidentiae forsitan non ob aliam causam non tam diu clausos uinculis carceris reseruare uoluisse nisi ut instructi et robustius animati litteris tuis uoto prouiore ad coronam destinata possemus peruenire. Inluserunt enim nobis litterae tuae ut in tempestate quadam serenitas, ut in turbido mari exoptata tranquillitas, ut in laboribus requies, ut in periculis et doloribus



- sanitas, ut in densissimis tenebris candida lux et refulgens. Ita illas animo si-  
tiente perbibimus et uoto esuriente suscepimus, ut ad certamen inimici ex illis  
nos satis pastos et saginatos gaudeamus. Reddet tibi Dominus pro ista tua  
caritate mercedem et huius tam boni operis rapraesentabit debitum frugem».
56. Cf. E. V. REBENACK, *Thasci Caecili Cypriani De Opere et Eleemosynis. A Translation with an Introduction and Commentary*, «Patristic Studies», 94 (Washington 1962) 32-35, where he shows that in his study of *Op.*, *eleemosyna* in general means corporal works of mercy. He also shows (pp. 35-43) that *opus*, *operatio*, *operari*, *operarius*, *opere*, always refer to corporal works of mercy, except when qualified by works like *iustitiae*, *iustus*. In the latter case, he continues (pp. 43-53), the meaning would be works of justice, etc., but «just», in the general biblical sense, when ascribed to things or deeds, means things or deeds that are pleasing to God (cf. H. LESETRE, *Justice in Dictionnaire de la Bible*, III, 1875-1876). Since *eleemosynae* being works of mercy, are certainly pleasing to God, they are, therefore, works of justice as well as works of mercy. See also P. ÉTRÉ, *o.c.*, pp. 242-243, 246-248, 258-264.
  57. *Quir.* 1 (C Chr. SL III, 81-82; 87). But see this whole section where Saint Cyprian quotes the Old Testament eighteen times and gives seventeen quotations from the New Testament.
  58. Cf. *Mort.* 16 (C Chr. SL IIIA, 25).
  59. Cf. *Sir.* 7, 39; *Mt.* 25, 36; *Quir.* 109 (C Chr. SL III, 174).
  60. *Ep.* 12, I, 1 (CAMPOS, 402): «tamen identidem uobis incumbo, ne quid ad curam desit his quibus ad gloriam nihil deest». *Ep.* 13, VII (CAMPOS, 408): «Et quamquam clero nostro et nuper cum adhuc essetis in carcere constituti, sed nunc quoque denuo plenissime scripserim, ut si quid uel ad uestitum uestrum uel ad uictum necessarium fuerit». *Ep.* 14, II, 2 (CAMPOS, 410): «tamen si qui sunt qui uel uestitu uel sumptu indigeant, sicut etiam pridem uobis scripseram cum adhuc essent in carcere constituti, subministretur eis quaecumque sunt necessaria».
  61. *Ep.* 5, I, 2 (CAMPOS, 377-378): «Quantum ad sumptus suggerendos, siue illis qui gloriosa uoce Dominum confessi in carcere sunt constituti, siue his qui pauperes et indigentes laborant et tamen in Domino perseuerant, peto nihil desit, cum summula omnis quae redacta est illic sit apud clericos distributa propter eiusmodi casus, ut haberent plures unde ad necessitates et pressuras singulorum operari possint».
  62. *Ep.* 14, II, 1 (CAMPOS, 410): «Habeatur interim quantum potest et quomodo potest pauperum cura, si qui tamen inconcussa fide stantes gregem Christi non reliquerunt, ut his ad tolerandam paenuriam sumptus per uestras diligentiam sugeratur, ne, quod circa fidentes tempestas non fecit, circa laborantes necessitas faciat».
  63. *Ep.* 7, I, 2 (CAMPOS, 384): «Viduarum et infirmorum et omnium pauperum curam peto diligenter habeatis. Sed et peregrinis si qui indigentes fuerint sumptus suggeratis de quantitate mea propria quam apud Rogatianum compresbyterum nostrum dimisi». For a review of how hospitality was li-

- ved in the first three centuries of the Church see J. MARTY, *Sur le devoir de l'hospitalité aux trois premiers siècles*, in *Revue d'Histoire et de Philosophie religieuses* 19 (1939) 288-295.
64. *Ep.* 62, II, 2 (CAMPOS, 596): «de barbarorum manibus exuatur et redimatur numaria quantitate».
  65. *Ep.* 12, I, 2 (CAMPOS, 402): «Corporibus etiam omnium, qui etsi torti non sunt, in carcere tamen glorioso exitu mortis excedunt, inperitatur et uigilantia et cura propensor». Cf. *ibidem*, II, 1 (CAMPOS, 403).
  66. *Tob.* 12, 12: «et cum sepelires tu mortuos simpliciter, et quia non es cunctatus exurgere et derelinquere prandium tuum et abisti et condisti mortuum»: *Mort.* 10 (C Chr. SL IIIA, 22); *Orat.* 33 (C Chr. SL IIIA, 110).
  67. *Prou.* 3, 28, quoted in *Quir.* 1 (C Chr. SL III, 83): «Ne dixeris: abi et reuertere, cras ego dabo, cum possis continuo bene facere. Non enim scis quid contingat sequenti die»; *Mt.* 6, 3 in *Quir.* 40 (C Chr. SL III, 132-133): «Nesciat sinistra quid faciat dextera tua, ut sit eleemosyna tua in abscondito»; *Mt.* 6, 2, *ibidem*: «Cum facis eleemosynam, noli bucinare ante te»; 2 *Cor.* 9, 7 in *Quir.* 1 (C Chr. SL III, 87): «Hilarem enim datorem diligit Deus». A history of good works is given by H. LECLERCQ, *Charité*, in *DACL*, III, 1, 598-653.
  68. Cf. 1 *Io.* 3, 17, quoted in *Quir.* 1 (C Chr. SL, III, 88).
  69. *Ep.* 13, VII (CAMPOS, 408): «Gaudeo autem quando cognosco plurimus fratres nostros pro sua dilectione certatim concurrere et necessitates uestras suis conlationibus adiuuare».
  70. *Ep.* 14, II, 2 (CAMPOS, 410): «Et quamquam sciam plurimos ex his fratrum uoto et dilectione susceptos».
  71. *Ep.* 5, II, 1 (CAMPOS, 378): «Nam etsi fratres pro dilectione sua cupidi sunt ad conueniendum et iusitandum confessores bonos».
  72. *Ep.* 12, I, 1 (CAMPOS, 402): «promptus et libens sollemni ministerio cuncta circa fortissimos fratres nostros dilectionis obsequia complerem».
  73. *Ep.* 12, II, 2 (CAMPOS, 403): «Quibus quidem nunc maior a nobis et dilectio et cura praestanda est».
  74. *Ep.* 62, I, 2 (CAMPOS, 596): «et non tantum dilectio»; *Ep.* 62, IV, 1 (CAMPOS, 598): «Si tamen ad explorandam animi nostri caritatem». But see this whole letter for the various references to Holy Scripture and our author's moving words and actions with reference to charity and the captives.
  75. *Quir.* 1 (C Chr. SL III, 84-85): «Nemini negandum eleemosynam. Item illic: *Mt.* 5, 42; «omni poscenti te da et ab eo qui uoluerit mutuari ne auersatus fueris».
  76. PONTIUS, *Vita Cypriani*, 10 (CSEL, III 3, C): «fidebat itaque exuberantium operum largitate, quod bonum est ad omnes, non ad solos domesticos fidei».
  77. *Quir.* 75 (C Chr. SL III, 160), to this end, follows the quote of 1 *Tim.* 5, 8. See also *Pat.* 13 (C Chr. SL IIIA, 126).
  78. *Ep.* 12, II, 2 (CAMPOS, 403): «Pauperibus quoque, ut saepe iam scripsi, cura ac diligentia uestra non desit, his tamen qui in fide stantes et nobiscum



fortiter militantes Christi castra non reliquerunt». The preference given to Christians was a general norm in the early Church. See P. BATTIFOL, *L'Église naissante et le catholicisme* (Paris 1971) 23.

79. *Op.* 1 (C Chr. SL IIIA, 55): «Mori sustinuit ut immortalitatem mortalibus exhiberet».
80. *Ibidem*: «Nec haberet quid fragilitatis humanae infirmitas adque inbecillitas faceret»; *Op.* 3 (C Chr. SL IIIA, 56): «Nec quisquam sic sibi de puro adque immaculato pectore blandiatur, ut innocentia sua fretus medicinam non putet adhibendam esse uulneribus».
81. *Op.* 1 (C Chr. SL IIIA, 55): «Multa et magna sunt, fratres carissimi, beneficia diuina quibus in salutem nostram Dei patris et Christi larga et copiosa clementia et operata sit et semper operetur, quod conseruandis ac uiuificandis nobis pater filium misit ut reparare nos posset quodque filius, missus, esse et hominis filius uoluit ut nos dei filios faceret».
82. *Ibidem*: «Sed adhuc qualis prouidentia illa et quanta clementia est, quod nobis salutari ratione prospicitur, ut homini qui redemptus est reseruando plenius consulatur»; *Op.* 3 (C Chr. SL IIIA, 56-57): «quam benigna est diuina clementia, quae cum sciat non deesse sanatis quaedam postmodum uulnera, dedit curandis denuo sanandisque uulneribus remedia salutaria»; *Op.* 2 (C Chr. SL IIIA, 56): «Misericors monet misericordiam fieri, et quia seruare quaerit quos magno redemit post gratiam baptismi sordidatos docet denuo posse purgari». As REBENACK, *o.c.*, p. 103, points out, the context shows that *gratia* here signifies «sanctifying grace» which, received in baptism, purifies the soul by remitting sins. See also *Ep.* 64, II-VI (CAMPOS, 615-618), D'ALES, *o.c.*, pp. 21-32 and J. VAN DER MEERSCH, *Grâce*, in *DTC*, VI, 1566. Perhaps the clearest reference to Saint Cyprian's idea on this point is in one of his letters relating to the lapsed: *Ep.* 55, XXII, 1 (CAMPOS, 535-536): «Quod utique ei dicitur quem constet cecidisse et quem Dominus hortatur per opera rursus exurgere quia scriptum est: *Eleemosyna a morte liberat* (Tob. 4, 10), et non utique ab illa morte quam semel Christi sanguis extinxit et a qua nos salutaris baptismi et redemptoris nostri gratia liberauit, sed ab ea quae per delicta postmodum serpit».
83. *Op.* 1 (C Chr. SL IIIA, 55): «nisi iterum pietas diuina subueniens iustitiae et misericordiae operibus ostensis uiam quandam tuendae salutis aperiret, ut sordes postmodum quascumque contrahimus eleemosynis abluamus»; *Laps.* 35 (C Chr. SL III, 240): «iustis operibus incumbere quibus peccata purgantur, eleemosynis frequenter insistere quibus a morte animae»; *Laps.* 36 (C Chr. SL III, 241): «Si precem toto corde quis faciat, si ueris paenitentiae lamentis et lacrimis ingemescat, si ad ueniam delicti sui Dominum iustis et continuis operibus inflectat, misereri talium potest».
84. *Prou.* 15, 27, quoted in *Op.* 2 (C Chr. SL IIIA, 55): «*Eleemosynis et fide delicta purgantur*»; *Sir.* 3, 30, quoted *ibidem*: «*Sicut aqua extinguit ignem, sic eleemosyna extinguit peccatum*»; *Lc.* 11, 40.41, quoted *ibidem* p. 56: «*Qui facit quod est intus fecit et quod foris est. Verum date eleemosynam, et ecce uo-*

- bis munda omnia*». See also *Sir.* 29, 12; *Ps.* 40, 2, quoted in *Quir.* 1 (C Chr. SL III, 83; 83-84).
85. *Op.* 2 (C Chr. SL IIIA, 56): «docens scilicet et ostendens non manus lauandas esse sed pectus et sordes intrinsecus potius quam extrinsecus detrahendas, uerum qui purgauerit quod est intus eum quoque id quod fortis est repurgasse et emundata mente cute quoque et corpore mundum esse coepisse».
  86. Saint Cyprian however does distinguish in other contexts, between grave sins and minor sins. For example, regarding the lapsed we have the contrast in *Ep.* 17, II, 1 (CAMPOS, 420): «in minoribus delictis quae non in Deum committuntur» with *Ep.* 16, II, 2 (CAMPOS, 417): «Summum enim delictum esse quod persecutio committi coegit sciunt ipsi etiam qui commiserunt». The lapsed are also told in *Laps.* 35 (C Chr. SL III, 240): «grauissimum conscientiae crimen agnoscite» and in *Laps.* 30 (C Chr. SL III, 238): «Animam tuam, misera, perdidisti; spiritaliter mortua superuiuere hic tibi et ipsa ambulans funus tuum portare coepisti». Cf. F. CAVALLERA, *La doctrine de la pénitence au IIIème siècle* in *Bulletin de Littérature Ecclésiastique* 31 (1930) 63. Other examples of mortal sins are found in *Pat.* 14 (C Chr. SL IIIA, 126): «Adulterium, fraus, homicidium mortale crimen est». See also SAXER, *o.c.*, pp. 155-160.
  87. *Op.* 3 (C Chr. SL IIIA, 56): «Agnoscamus itaque, fratres carissimi, diuinae indulgentiae salubre munus et emundandis purgandisque peccatis nostris, qui sine aliquo conscientiae uulnere esse non possumus, medellis spiritalibus uulnera nostra curemus».
  88. *Prou.* 20, 9, quoted *ibidem*: «*Quis gloriabitur castum se habere cor aut quis gloriabitur mundus esse a peccatis?*»
  89. 1 *Io.* 1, 8, quoted *ibidem*: «*Si dixerimus quia peccatum non habemus, nos ipsos decipimus et ueritas in nobis non est*».
  90. *Op.* 4 (C Chr. SL IIIA, 57): «Et cum peccata eis sua exprobrari praecepisset cumque eorum facinora pleno indignationis inpetu protulisset dixissetque eos nec si orationibus et precibus et ieiuniis uterentur, satisfacere pro delictis posse, nec si in cilicio et cinere uoluerentur, iram Dei posse lenire, in nouissima tamen parte demonstrans solis eleemosynis Deum posse placari addidit dicens: «*Frangere esurienti panem tuum et egenos sine tecto induc in domum tuam. Si uideris nudum, uesti et domesticos seminis tui non despicias. Tunc erumpet temporaneum lumen tuum et uestimenta tua cito orientur, et praeibit ante te iustitia et claritas Dei circumdabit te. Tunc exclamabis, et Deus exaudiet te. Dum adhuc loqueris, dicet: ecce adsum*» (*Is.* 58, 7-9).
  91. *Op.* 5 (C Chr. SL IIIA, 57): «Remedia propitiando Deo ipsius Dei uerbis data sunt, quid deberent facere peccantes magisteria diuina docuerunt, operationibus iustis Deo satisfieri, misericordiae meritis peccata purgari. Et apud Salomonem legimus: «*Conclude eleemosynam in corde pauperis, et haec pro te exorabit ab omni malo*». (*Sir.* 29, 12). *Ibidem*, p. 58, quoting *Dan.* 4, 24: «*Propterea, rex, consilium meum placeat tibi, et peccata tua eleemosynis redime et iniustitias tuas miserationibus pauperum, et erit Deus patiens peccatis tuis*».

92. *Ibidem*, p. 57: «*Qui obturat aures ne audiat inbecillum, et ipse inuocabit Deum et non erit qui exaudiat eum*» (Prou. 21, 13). Neque enim mereri Dei misericordiam poterit qui misericors ipse non fuerit aut inpetrabit de diuina pietate aliquid in precibus qui ad precem pauperis non fuerit humanus».
93. *Ibidem*, p. 58: *Bona est oratio cum ieiunio et eleemosyna, quia eleemosyna a morte liberat et ipsa purgat peccata*» (Tob. 12, 8-9). Ostendit orationes nostras ac ieiunia minus posse, nisi eleemosynis adiuentur, deprecationes solas parum ad inpetrandum ualere, nisi factorum et operum accessione satientur. Reuelat angelus et manifestat et firmat eleemosynis petitiones nostras efficaces fieri, eleemosynis uitam de periculis redimi, eleemosynis a morte animas liberari».
94. *Op.* 6 (C Chr. SL IIIA, 58): «In Actis apostolorum facti fides posita est, et quod eleemosynis non tantum a secunda sed et a prima morte animae liberentur, gestae et inpletae rei probatione conpertum est».
95. *Ibidem*, pp. 58-59: «Tabitha operationibus iustis et eleemosynis praestandis plurimum dedita cum infirmata esset et mortua, ad cadauer exanimae Petrus accitus est. Qui cum inpigre pro apostolica humanitate uenisset, circumsteterunt eum uiduae flentes et rogantes, pallia et tunicas et omnia illa quae prius sumpserant indumenta monstrantes nec pro defuncta suis uocibus sed ipsius operibus deprecantes».
96. *Ibidem*, p. 59: «Tantum potuerunt misericordiae merita, tantum opera iusta ualuerunt. Quae laborantibus uiduis largita fuerat subsidia uiuendi meruit ad uitam uiduarum petitione reuocari».
97. *Op.* 7 (C Chr. SL IIIA, 59): «caelestis gratiae et comparatorem salutis aeternae».
98. *Lc.* 19, 9, quoted in *Op.* 8 (C Chr. SL IIIA, 60): «*Salus hodie domui huic facta est, quoniam et hic filius est Abrahae*».
99. G. J. BUDDE, *Christian charity: now and always. The Fathers of the Church and almsgiving in The Ecclesiastical Review* 85 (1931) 572.
100. Cf. *Mt.* 10, 42: *Quir.* 1 (C Chr. SL III, 84).
101. *Op.* 10 (C Chr. SL IIIA, 61): «dum times ne res familiaris deficiat uita ipsa et salus defecit».
102. *Op.* 13 (C Chr. SL IIIA, 63): «Seruas pecuniam quae te seruata non seruat».
103. *Ibidem*: «Reditus tuos diuide cum Deo tuo, fructus tuos partire cum Christo, fac tibi possessionum terrestrium Christum participem, ut et ille te sibi faciat regnorum caelestium coheredem».
104. *Op.* 14 (C Chr. SL IIIA, 64): «Et quae matrona locuples et diues es ungue oculos tuos non stibio diaboli sed collyrio Christi, ut peruenire ab uidendum Deum possis, dum Deum et operibus et moribus promereris».
105. *Op.* (C Chr. SL IIIA, 64): «Multum beata mulier et gloriosa quae etiam ante diem iudicii meruit iudicis uoce laudari».
106. *Op.* 17 (C Chr. SL IIIA, 66): «neque in penuria et fame cibus ante quam misericordia cogitatur, ut dum in opere salutari carnaliter uita contemnitur spiritaliter anima seruetur».
107. *Op.* 18 (C Chr. SL IIIA, 66): «Ut in hac uita saeculari alendis sustienendisque pignoribus quo maior est numerus hoc maior et sumptus est, ita et in



- uita spiritali adque caelesti quo amplior fuerit pignorum copia esse et operum debet maior inpena.
108. *Ibidem*: «multorum animae liberandae».
  109. *Op.* 19 (C Chr. SL IIIA, 67): «Illi adsigna facultates tuas quas heredibus seruas: ille sit liberis tuis tutor, ille curator, ille contra omnes iniurias saeculares diuina maiestate protector. Patrimonium Deo creditum nec respubli- ca eripit nec fiscus inuadit nec calumnia aliqua forensis euertit. In tuto hereditas ponitur quae Deo custode seruatur. Hoc est caris pignoribus in posterum prouidere, hoc est futuris heredibus paterna pietate consulere».
  110. *Ibidem*: «Praeuaricator itaque et proditor pater es, nisi filiis tuis fideliter consulas, nisi conseruandis eis religiosa et uera pietate prospicias».
  111. Cf. *Tob.* 4, 5-11. *Op.* 20 (C Chr. SL IIIA, 67-68).
  112. *Op.* 21 (C Chr. SL IIIA, 68): «quanto inlustrior muneris et maior est gloria Deum et Christum spectatores habere, quanto istic et apparatus uberior et sumptus largior exhibendus est, ubi ad spectaculum conueniunt caelorum uirtutes, conueniunt angeli omnes, ubi munerario non quadriga uel consula- tus petitur, sed uita aeterna praestatur, nec captatur inanis et temporarius fauor uulgi, sed perpetuum praemium regni caelestis accipitur».
  113. *Op.* 22 (C Chr. SL IIIA, 69): «tu aeternam uitam operantibus polliceris».
  114. *Op.* 23 (C Chr. SL IIIA, 69): «operantibus praemium pollicitus».
  115. *Mt.* 25, 46, in *ibidem*, p. 70: «*iusti autem in uitam aeternam*».
  116. *Op.* 24 (C Chr. SL IIIA, 71): «Demus cibum et potum saecularem cum Ab- raham et Isaac et Iacob ad conuiuium caeleste uenturi. Ne parum metamus plurimum seminemus. Securitati ac saluti aeternae dum tempus est consu- lamus».
  117. *Gal.* 6, 9, quoted *ibidem*: «*Bonum autem facientes non deficiamus, tempore enim suo metemus*».
  118. *Op.* 25 (C Chr. SL IIIA, 71): «terreno patrimonio uendito adque distracto fundos illuc transferentes ubi fructus caperent possessionis aeternae, illic comparantes domos ubi inciperent semper habitare».
  119. *Mort.* 26 (C Chr. SL IIIA, 31): «remunerati misericordes qui alimentis et largitionibus pauperum iustitiae opera fecerunt, qui dominica praecepta se- ruantes ad caelestes thesauros terrena patrimonia transtulerunt».
  120. *Op.* 26 (C Chr. SL IIIA, 72): «Quae illa erit, fratres carissimi, operantium gloria, quam grandis et summa laetitia, cum populum suum Dominus coe- perit recensere et meritis adque operibus nostris praemia promissa contri- buens pro terrenis caelestia, pro temporalibus sempiterna, pro modicis mag- na praestare, obferre nos patri qui nos sua sanctificatione restituit, aeternitatem nobis immortalitatemque largiri ad quam nos sanguinis sui ui- uificatione reparauit, reduces ad paradisum denuo facere, regna caelorum fi- de et ueritate suae pollicitationis aperire. Haec haereant firmiter sensibus nostris, haec intellegantur plena fide, haec corde toto diligentur, haec inde- sinentium operum magnanimitate redimantur. Praeclara et diuina res, fra- tres carissimi, salutaris operatio, solacium grande credentium, securitatis no- strae salubre praesidium, munimentum spei, tutela fidei, medela peccati, res



posita in potestate facientis, res et grandis et facilis, sine periculo persecutionis corona pacis, uerum Dei munus et maximum, infirmis necessarium, fortibus gloriosum, quo christianus adiutus perfert gratiam spiritalem, promeretur Christum iudicem, Deum computat debitorem. Ad hanc operum salutarium palmam libenter ac prompte certemus, omnes in agone iustitiae Deo et Christo spectante curramus et qui saeculo et mundo maiores esse iam coepimus cursum nostrum nulla saeculi et mundi cupiditate tardemus. Si expeditos, si celeres, si in hoc operis agone currentes dies nos uel redditionis uel persecutionis inuenerit, nusquam Dominus meritis nostris ad praemium deerit, in pace uincentibus coronam candidam pro operibus dabit, in persecutione purpuream pro passione geminabit».

121. *Op.* 16 (C Chr. SL IIIA, 65): «Si enim Deus eleemosynis pauperum faeneratur».
122. *Mt.* 5, 7: *Quir.* 1 (C Chr. SL IIIA, 84). A glimpse of this is also found in the following: *Op.* 17 (C Chr. SL IIIA, 66): «Helias itaque typum Christi gerens et quod ille pro misericordia uicem singulis reddat ostendens». From what we have seen, it is clear that there is no shade of communism in this spirit of almsgiving, since it is necessary to have something in order to give alms, to receive merit, spiritual returns and the blessing which is in the actual giving: «*It is a more blessed thing to give, rather than to receive*» (*Act.* 20, 35). Cf. BATTIFOL, *o.c.*, p. 23.
123. *Op.* 9 (C Chr. SL IIIA, 60): «Sed uereris et metuis ne si operari plurimum coeperis patrimonio tuo larga operatione finito ad penuriam forte redigaris».
124. *Ibidem*, pp. 60-61: «esto in hac parte intrepidus, esto securus. Finiri non potest unde in usus Christi impenditur, unde opus caeleste celebratur. Nec hoc tibi de meo spondeo sed de sanctarum scripturarum fide et diuinae pollicitationis auctoritate promitto. Loquitur per Salomonem Spiritus sanctus et dicit: «*Qui dat pauperibus numquam egebit: qui autem auertit oculum suum in magna penuria erit*» *Prou.* 28, 27), ostendens misericordes adque operantes egere non posse, magis parcos et steriles ad inopiam postmodum deuenire». Cf. *Quir.* 1 (C Chr. SL III, 82).
125. *Ibidem*, p. 61: «Item beatus apostolus Paulus dominicae inspirationis gratia plenus. «*Qui administrat*», inquit, «*semen seminanti et panem ad edendum praestabit et multiplicabit seminationem uestram et augebit incrementa frugum iustitiae uestrae, ut in omnibus locupletemini*» (2 Cor. 9, 10-11). Et iterum: «*Administratio huius officii non tantum supplebit ea quae sanctis desunt, sed et abundabit per multam gratiarum actionem in Domino*» (2 Cor 9, 12)». Cf. *Quir.* 1 (C Chr. SL III, 87).
126. *Ibidem*: «quoniam dum gratiarum actio ad Deum pro eleemosynis adque operationibus nostris pauperum oratione dirigitur, census operantis Dei retributione cumulatur».
127. *Ibidem*: «Et Dominus in euangelio iam tunc eiusmodi hominum corda considerans et perfidis adque incredulis praescia uoce denuntians contestatur et dicit: «*Nolite cogitare dicentes: quid edemus aut quid bibemus aut quid uestie-*

- mur? Haec enim nationes quaerunt. Scit autem pater uester quia horum omnium indigetis. Quaerite primo regnum et iustitiam Dei, et omnia ista adponentur uobis» (Mt. 6, 31-33). Eis omnia adponi dicit et tradi qui regnum et iustitiam Dei quaerunt».*
128. *Op. 11 (C Chr. SL IIIA, 62): «Metuis ne patrimonium tuum forte deficiat, si operari ex eo largiter coeperis? Quando enim factum est ut iusto possent deesse subsidia? cum scriptum sit: «Non occidet fame Dominus animam iustam» (Prou. 10, 3)».*
  129. *Ibidem: «Helias in solitudine coruis ministrantibus pascitur et Daniel in lacum ad leonum praedam iussu regis incluso prandium diuinitus apparatur». Cf. Orat. 21, passim (C Chr. SL IIIA, 103).*
  130. *Ibidem: «et tu metuis ne operanti et Dominum promerenti desit alimentum, quando ipse in euangelio ad exprobrationem eorum quibus mens dubia est et fides parua contestetur et dicat: Aspicite uolatilia caeli quoniam non seminant neque metunt neque colligunt in horrea, et pater uester caelestis alit illa. Nonne uos pluris illis estis? (Mt. 6, 26). Volucres Deus pascit et passeribus alimenta diurna praestantur et quibus nullus diuinae rei sensus est eis nec potus nec cibus deest: tu christiano, tu Dei seruo, tu operibus bonis dedito, tu domino suo caro aliquid existimas defuturum?».*
  131. *Op. 12 (C Chr. SL IIIA, 62): «Nisi si putas quia qui Christum pascit a Christo ipse non pascitur aut eis terrena deerunt quibus caelestia et diuina tribuuntur. Unde haec incredula cogitatio. unde impia et sacrilega ista meditatio? Quid facit in domo fidei perfidum pectus? Quid qui Christo omnino non credit appellatur et dicitur christianus?»; Op. 13 (C Chr. SL IIIA, 63): «Quid tibi istis ineptis et stultis cogitationibus plaudis, quasi metu et sollicitudine futurorum ab operibus retarderis?»*
  132. *Op. 12 (C Chr. SL IIIA, 62): «Pharisaei tibi magis congruit nomen. Nam cum Dominus in euangelio de eleemosynis disputaret et ut nobis amicos de terrestribus lucris prouida operatione faceremus qui nos postmodum in tabernacula aeterna susciperent fideliter ac salubriter praemoneret, addidit post haec scriptura dicens: «Audiebant autem haec omnia Pharisaei qui erant cupidissimi et inridebant» (Lc. 16, 14)».*
  133. *Op. 17 (C Chr. SL IIIA, 66): «Haec dicit Dominus: fidelia farris non deficiet et capsaces olei non minuet usque in diem quo dabit Dominus imbrem super terram» (1 Reg. 17, 14). Secundum diuinae pollicitationis fidem multiplicata sunt uiduae et cumulata quae praestitit et operibus iustis ac misericordiae meritis augmenta et incrementa summentibus farris et olei uasa completa sunt».*
  134. *Op. 6 (C Chr. SL IIIA, 58-59): «Tabitha operationibus iustis et eleemosynis praestandis plurimum dedita cum infirmata esset et mortua, ad cadauer animae Petrus accitus est. Qui cum inpigre pro apostolica humanitate uenisset, circumsteterunt eum uiduae flentes et rogantes, pallia et tunicas et omnia illa quae prius sumpserant indumenta monstrantes nec pro defuncta suis uocibus sed ipsius operibus deprecantes. Sensit Petrus impetrari posse quod sic petebatur nec defuturum Christi auxilium uiduis deprecantibus, quando esset in uiduis ipse uestitus».*

135. *Ibidem*, p. 59: «Tantum potuerunt misericordiae merita, tantum opera iusta ualuerunt. Quae laborantibus uiduis largita fuerat subsidia uiuendi meruit ad uitam uiduarum petitione reuocari».
  136. Cf. *Ep.* 76 (CAMPOS, 725-732), *passim*.
  137. *Dem.* 20 (C Chr. SL IIIA, 47): «Vinea licet fallat et olea decipiat et herbis siccitate morientibus aestuans campus areseat, quid hoc ad christianos, quid ad Dei seruos quos paradus inuitat, quos gratia omnis et copia regni caelestis exspectat? Exultant semper in Domino et laetantur et gaudent in Deo suo et mala adque aduersa mundi fortiter tolerant, dum bona et prospera futura prospectant».
  138. *Op.* 7 (C Chr. SL IIIA, 59): «Itaque in euangelio Dominus doctor uitae nostrae et magister salutis aeternae uiuificans credentium populum et uiuificationis consulens in aeternum inter sua mandata diuina et praecepta caelestia nihil crebrius mandat et praecipit quam ut insistamus eleemosynis dandis nec terrenis possessionibus incubemus sed caelestes thesauros potius recondamus».
- This detachment from earthly things is also brought out in our Lord's words and Saint Cyprian's commentary, *Orat.* 19 (C Chr. SL IIIA, 102): «*Nolite in crastinum cogitare: crastinus enim ipse cogitabit sibi. Sufficit diei malitia sua*» (Mt. 6, 34). Merito ergo Christi discipulus uictum sibi in diem postulat qui de crastino cogitare prohibetur.
139. *Lc.* 12, 33, quoted in *Op.* 7 (C Chr. SL IIIA, 59): «*Vendite, inquit, res uestras et data eleemosynam*».
  140. *Ibidem*: «*Nolite uobis condere thesauros super terram, ubi tinea et comestura exterminat et ubi fures effodiunt et furantur. Thesaurizate autem uobis thesauros in caelo. Ubi enim fuerit thesaurus tuus, illic erit et cor tuum*» (Mt. 6, 19-21). «*Et cum obseruata lege perfectum et consummatum uellet ostendere, «Si uis», inquit, «perfectus esset, uade et uende omnia tua et da egenis, et habebis thesaurum in caelo, et ueni sequere me*» (Mt. 19, 21)». This idea is also brought out in Saint Cyprian's words to the wealthy women, that they who are rich are those who are rich in God: *Habit.* 7 (CAMPOS, 127-128): «*Sed sunt aliquae diuites et facultatum ubertate locupletes, quae opes suas praeferant et se bonis suis uti debere contendunt. Sciant primo illam diuitem esse quae in Deo diues est, illam esse locupletem quae locuples in Christo est, bona illa esse quae sunt spiritalia, diuina, caelestia, quae nos ad Deum ducant, quae nobiscum apud Deum perpetua possessione permaneat*».
  141. *Op.* 10 (C Chr. SL IIIA, 61): «*Et ideo bene apostolus clamat et dicit: «Nihil intulimus in hunc munus, uerum nec auferre possumus. Habentes itaque exhibitionem et tegumentum his contenti simus*» (1 Tim. 6, 7-8)».
  142. *Op.* 15 (C Chr. SL IIIA, 64): «*Locuples et diues dominicum celebrare te credis quae corban omnino non respicis, quae in dominicum sine sacrificio uenis, quae partem de sacrificio quod pauper obtulit sumis?*».
  143. *Ibidem*: «*Intuere in euangelio iudum praeceptorum caelestium memorem, inter ipsas pressuras et angustias egestatis operantem, in gazophylacium duo*



quae sola sibi fuerant minuta mittentem, quam cum animaduerneret Dominus et uideret, non de patrimonio sed de animo opus eius examinans et considerans, non quantum sed ex quanto dedisset, respondit et dixit: «Amen dico uobis quoniam uidua ista omnibus plus misit in dona Dei. Omnes enim isti de eo quod abundauit illis miserunt in dona Dei. Haec autem de inopia sua omnem quemcumque habuit uictum misit» (Lc. 21, 3-4). Multum beata mulier et gloriosa quae etiam ante diem iudicii meruit iudicis uoce laudari. Pudeat diuites sterilitatis adque infelicitatis suae. Vidua et inops uidua in opere inuenitur, cumque uniuersa quae dantur pupillis et uiduis conferantur, dat illa quam oportebat accipere, ut sciamus quae poena sterilem diuitem maneat».

144. *Ibidem*: «quando hoc documento operari etiam pauperes debeant».
145. *Op. 16* (C Chr. SL IIIA, 65): «Sed nec illa res, fratres carissimi, a bonis operibus et iustis refrenet et reuocet christianum quod excusari se posse aliquis existimet beneficio filiorum, quando in impensis spiritalibus Christum cogitare qui accipere se professus est debeamus nec conseruos liberis nostris, sed Dominum praeferamus».
146. *Mt. 10, 37*, quoted *ibidem*: «Qui diligit», inquit, «patrem aut matrem super me non est me dignus, et qui diligit filium aut filiam super me non est me dignus».
147. *Ibidem*: «Nam si Deum toto corde diligimus, nec parentes nec filios Deo praeferre debemus. Quod et Iohannes in epistula sua ponit caritatem Dei apud eos non esse quos iudeamus operari in pauperem nolle. «Qui habuerit», inquit, «substantiam mundi et uiderit fratrem suum desiderantem et clauderit uiscera sua, quomodo caritas Dei manet in illo?» (1 Io. 3, 17)».
148. *Ibidem*: «non est quod quis terrena caelestibus praeferat nec diuinis humana praeponat». In *Quir.* we find a whole section of Scripture quotes entitled «That nothing is to be preferred to the love of God and of Christ». The quotes include *Deut. 6, 5* and *Mt. 10, 37-38*. Cf. *Quir. 18* (C Chr. SL III, 112-113). We also find the same insistence and idea of detachment in the following, *Orat. 15* (C Chr. SL IIIA, 99): «Deum toto corde diligere, amare in illo quod pater est, timere quod Deus est, Christo nihil omnino praeponere quia nec nobis quicquam ille praeposuit, caritati eius inseparabiliter adhaerere, cruci eius fortiter ac fidenter adsistere».
149. *Op. 17* (C Chr. SL IIIA. 65-66): «Nec obtemperare illa dubitauit aut Heliae filios mater in fame et egestate praeposuit. Fit immo in conspectu Dei quod Deo placeat, prompte ac libenter quod petebatur offertur nec de abundantia portio sed de modico totum datur, et esurientibus liberis alter prius pascitur, neque in penuria et fame cibus ante quam misericordia cogitur».
150. *Ibidem*, p. 66: «Et illa nondum Christum sciebat, nondum praecepta eius audierat, non cruce et passione eius redempta cibum et potum pro sanguine rependebat, ut ex hoc appareat quantum in ecclesia peccet qui se et filios Christo anteponebat diuitias suas seruat nec patrimonium copiosum cum indigentium paupertate communicat».
151. *Ibidem*: «Nec filiis abstulit mater quod Heliae dedit, sed magis contulit filiis quod benigne et pie fecit».



152. *Op.* 18 (C Chr. SL IIIA, 66): «Sed enim multi sunt in domo liberi et retardat te numerositas filiorum quominus largiter bonis operibus insistas». This doctrine, that the number of children is no excuse for not giving alms, was new, later to be repeated by other Fathers of the Church. Cf. R. SIERRA BRAVO, *Doctrina social y económica de los Padres de la Iglesia* (Madrid 1967) p. 592.
153. *Op.* 18 (C Chr. SL IIIA, 66): «Ut in hac uita saeculari alendis sustinendisque pignoribus quo maior est numerus hoc maior et sumptus est, ita et in uita spiritali adque caelesti quo amplior fuerit pignorum copia esse et operum debet maior impensa».
154. *Ibidem*: «Adqui hoc ipso operari amplius debens, quo multorum pignorum pater es. Plures sunt pro quibus Dominus deprecetur».
155. *Ibidem*, p. 67: «*Iob homo uerus et iustus habuit filios septem et filias tres et emundabat illos offerens pro eis hostias Deo secundum numerum illorum et pro peccatis eorum uitulum unum*» (*Iob.* 1, 1.3-5). Si ergo uere filios tuos diligis, si eis exhibes plenam et paternam dulcedinem caritatis, operari magis debes ut filios tuos Deo iusta operatione commendes».
156. *Op.* 19 (C Chr. SL IIIA, 67): «Nec eum liberis tuis cogites patrem qui et temporarius et infirmus est, sed illum pares qui aeternus et firmus filiorum spiritualium paterest. Illi adsigna facultates tuas quas heredibus seruas: ille sit liberis tuis tutor, ille curator, ille contra omnes iniurias saeculares diuina maiestate protector».
157. *Ibidem*: «Patrimonium Deo creditum nec respublica eripit nec fiscus inuadit nec calumnia aliqua forensis euerit. In tuto hereditas ponitur quae Deo custode seruatur. Hoc est caris pignoribus in posterum prouidere, hoc est futuris heredibus paterna pietate consulere».
158. *Ibidem*: «*Iuuenior fui et senui et non uidi iustum derelictum neque semen eius quaerens panem. Tota die miseretur et faenerat et semen eius in benedictione est*» (*Ps.* 36, 25-26)». Cf. *Quir.* 1 (C Chr. SL III, 83).
159. *Ibidem*: «*Qui conuersatur sine uituperatione in iustitia beatos filios relinquet*» (*Prou.* 20, 7)».
160. *Op.* 20 (C Chr. SL IIIA, 67): «Esto potius liberis tuis pater talis qualis Tobias extitit. Da utilia et salutaria praecepta pignoribus qualia ille filio dedit».
161. *Ibidem*, p. 68: «*Prout habueris, fili, sic fac: si tibi fuerit copiosa substantia, plus ex illa fac eleemosynam. Si exiguum habueris, ex hoc ipso exiguo communica*» *Tob.* 4, 8-9)». Cf. *Quir.* 1 (C Chr. SL III, 82).
162. *Op.* 24 (C Chr. SL IIIA, 71): «Et idcirco, fratres carissimi, quibus metus in Deum pronus est et spreto calcatoque iam mundo ad superna et diuina animus erectus est, fide plena, mente deuota, operatione continua promouendo Domino obsequium praebeamus».
163. *Op.* 25 (C Chr. SL IIIA, 71): «Domicilia tunc et praedia uenundabant et dispensandam pauperibus quantitatem libenter ac largiter apostolis obferebant».
164. *Ibidem*: «Talis tunc fuit inoperationibus cumulus qualis in dilectione consensus, sicut legimus in Actis apostolorum: «*Turba autem eorum qui credide-*

- rant anima ac mente una agebant nec fuit inter illos discrimen ullum nec quicquam suum iudicabant ex bonis quae eis erant, sed fuerant illis omnia communia» (Act. 4, 32)». See also *Laps.* 35 (C Chr. SL III, 226-227): «Seque- retur Dominum solutus et liber, ut apostoli et sub apostolis multi et non- nulli saepe fecerunt qui, et rebus suis et parentibus derelictis, indiuiduis Christi nexibus adhaeserunt».*
166. Cf. SAXER, *o.c.*, pp. 179-180.
  167. Cf. *Lc.* 18, 29 sq.: *Laps.* 12 (C Chr. SL III, 227).
  168. *Don.* 14 (C Chr. SL IIIA, 11-12): «Una igitur placida et fida tranquillitas, una solida et firma securitas, si qui ab his inquietantis saeculi turbinibus extractus salutaris portus statione fundetur: ad caelum oculos tollit a terris et ad Domini munus admissus ac Deo suo mente iam proximus, quicquid apud ceteros in rebus humanis sublime ac magnum uidetur, intra suam iacere conscientiam gloriatur».
  169. *Don.* 15 (C Chr. SL IIIA, 12): «Quem ille diuitem fecerit, nemo pauperem faciet. Penuria esse nulla iam poterit, cum semel pectus caelestis sagina saturauit. Iam tibi auro distincta laquearia et pretioso marmoris crustis uestita domicilia sordebunt, cum scieris te excolendum magis, te potius ornandum, domum tibi hanc esse potiore, quam Dominus insedit templi uice, in qua Spiritus sanctus coepit habitare. Pingamus hanc domum pigmentis innocentiae, luminemus luce iustitiae. Non haec umquam procumbet in lapsum senio uestustatis, nec pigmento parietis aut auro exolescente foedabitur. Caduca sunt, quaecumque fucata sunt, nec fiduciam praebent possidentibus stabilem, quae possessionis non habeant ueritatem».
  170. *Op.* 26 (C Chr. SL IIIA, 72): «omnes in agone iustitiae Deo et Christo spectante curramus et qui saeculo et mundo maiores esse iam coepimus cursum nostrum nulla saeculi et mundi cupiditate tardemus».
  171. Cf. *Op.* 8 (C Chr. SL IIIA, 60).
  172. BUDDE, *o.c.*, p. 578.
  173. Cf. JUSTIN, 1 *Apologia* 67 (PG 6, 429).
  174. *Ibidem*, p. 186. The same point is also brought out by TERTULLIAN, *Apol.* 39, 5 (C Chr. SL I, 151): «Nam nemo compellitur, sed sponte confert».
  175. *Habit.* 11 (CAMPOS, 130-131): «Utere, sed ad res salutare, utere sed ad bonas artes, utere ad illa quae Deus praecepit, quae Dominus ostendit. Diuitem te sentiant pauperes, locupletem te sentiant indigentes. (...) Atquin tentatio est patrimonium grande, nisi ad usus bonos census operetur, ut patrimonio suo unusquisque locupletior magis redimere debeat quam augere delicta».
  176. BUDDE, *o.c.*, p. 569.
  177. Cf. A. ROYO MARIN, *Teología de la Caridad* (Madrid 1963) pp. 73-75.
  178. *Op.* 9 (C Chr. SL IIIA, 61): «Quaerite primo regnum at iustitiam Dei (*Mt.* 6, 33)». Saint Cyprian also says that good works, in themselves, are to no avail unless all the requirements of charity are kept whole and inviolate: *Zel.* 13 (C Chr. SL IIIA, 82): «nec eleemosynas nec passionem quoque ipsam confessoris et martyris profuturam, nisi caritatis foedera integra adque inuiolata seruasset».

179. *Op.* 17 (C Chr. SL IIIA, 65-66): «Fit immo in conspectu Dei quod Deo placeat».
180. *Op.* 15 (C Chr. SL IIIA, 64): «*Amen dico uobis quoniam uidua ista omnibus plus misit in dona Dei (Lc. 21, 3)*».
181. *Ibidem*, pp. 64-65: «Adque ut intellegamus haec opera Deo dari et eum quisque haec faciat Deum promereri, Christus illud dona Dei appellat et in dona Dei uiduam duos quadrantes misisse significat, ut magis ac magis posset esse manifestum quia qui miseretur pauperis Deo faenerat».
182. *Op.* 20 (C Chr. SL IIIA, 67): «*Et nunc, fili, mando uobis, seruite Deo in ueritate et facite coram illo quod illi placet, et filiis uestris mandate ut faciant iustitiam et eleemosynas (Tob. 4, 8)*».
183. *Ibidem*, p. 68: «*Munus bonum est eleemosyna omnibus qui faciunt eam coram summo Deo (Tob. 4, 12)*». Cf. *Quir.* 1 (C Chr. SL III, 82).
184. *Orat.* 24 (C Chr. SL IIIA, 105): «Neque enim in sacrificiis quae Abel et Cain primi obtulerunt munera eorum Deus, sed corda intuebatur, ut ille placeret in munere qui placebat in corde».
185. *Op.* 18 (C Chr. SL IIIA, 66): «Sic Iob sacrificia numerosa pro liberis offerebat, quantusque erat in domo pignorum numerus tantus dabatur Deo et numerus hostiarum».
186. *Ibidem*, p. 67: «Si ergo uere filios tuos diligis, si eis exhibes plenam et paternam dulcedinem caritatis, operari magis debes ut filios tuos Deo iusta operatione commendes».
187. *Op.* 13 (C Chr. SL IIIA, 63): «Reditus tuos diuide cum Deo tuo»; *Op.* 19 (C Chr. SL IIIA, 67): «Illi adsigna facultates tuas quas heredibus seruas».
188. *Op.* 16 (C Chr. SL IIIA, 65): «Si enim Deus eleemosynis pauperum faeneratur». The idea of lending to God and God being made our debtor is found several times, e.g., *Prou.* 19, 17: «*Qui pauperum miseretur, Deum faenerat*», *Quir.* 1 (C Chr. SL III, 82); *Op.* 26 (C Chr. SL IIIA, 72): Deum computat debitorem»; *Laps.* 35 (C Chr. SL III, 241): «*incunctanter et largiter fiat operatio, census omnis in medellan uulneris erogetur: opibus et facultatibus nostris qui de nobis iudicaturus est Dominus faeneretur*»; *Orat.* 33 (C Chr. SL IIIA, 111): «*Nam quando qui miseretur pauperi Deo faenerat et qui dat minimis Deo donat*», etc.. Cf. REBENACK, *o.c.*, p. 128.
189. *Op.* 21 (C Chr. SL IIIA, 68): «Quale munus est, fratres carissimi, cuius editio Deo spectante celebratur. Si in gentilium munere grande et gloriosum uidetur proconsules uel imperatores habere praesentes, et apparatus ac sumptus aput munerarios maior est ut possint placere maioribus, quanto inlustrior muneris et maior est gloria Deum et Christum spectatores habere, quanto istic et apparatus uberior et sumptus largior exhibendus est, ubi ad spectaculum conueiunt caelorum uirtutes, conueriunt angeli omnes».
190. *Orat.* 32 (C Chr. SL IIIA, 110): «*Bona est oratio cum ieiunio et elemosyna (Tob. 12, 8)*. Nam qui in die iudicii praemium pro operibus et eleemosynis redditurus est hodie quoque ad orationem cum operatione uenierit benignus auditor est. Sic denique Cornelius centurio cum oraret, meruit audiri. Fuit faciens multas eleemosynas in plebem et semper orans Deum. Huic



- circa horam nonam oranti adstitit angelus testimonium reddens sui operis et dicens: «*Corneli, orationes tuae et eleemosynae tuae ascenderunt ad memoriam coram Deo*» (Act. 10, 4).
191. Cf. *Orat.* 33 *passim* (C Chr. SL IIIA, 110-111).
  192. Cf. *Act.* 4, 32.
  193. *Op.* 25 (C Chr. SL IIIA, 71): «hoc est lege caelesti aequitatem Dei patris imitari».
  194. *Ibidem*: «Hoc est natiuitate spiritali uere Dei filium fieri».
  195. *Op.* 16 (C Chr. SL IIIA, 65): «et cum datur minimis Christo datur».
  196. *Op.* 12 (C Chr. SL IIIA, 62): «Nisi si putas quia qui Christum pascit a Christo ipse non pascitur».
  197. *Op.* 16 (C Chr. SL IIIA, 65): «quando in impensis spiritalibus Christum cogitare qui accipere se professus est».
  198. *Op.* 9 (C Chr. SL IIIA, 60): «Finiri non potest unde in usus Christi impenditur, unde opus caeleste celebratur».
  199. *Op.* 17 (C Chr. SL IIIA, 66): «Helias itaque typum Christi gerens».
  200. *Ibidem*: «non cruce et passione eius redempta cibum et potum pro sanguine rependebat».
  201. This is again referred to in a different context, i.e., the rich who do not give alms, in *Op.* 23 (C Chr. SL IIIA, 69): «Qui diaboli seruis minores sumus, ut Christo pro pretio passionis et sanguinis uicem nec in modicis rependamus».
  202. *Op.* 22 (C Chr. SL IIIA, 69): «Illic in pauperibus tuis tu uestiris et pascaris».
  203. *Op.* 23 (C Chr. SL IIIA, 70-71): «Quid potuit nobis maius Christus edicere? Quomodo magis potuit iustitiae ac misericordiae nostrae opera prouocare? quam quod paestari dixit sibi quicquid egenti praestatur et pauperi, et se dixit offendi nisi egenti praestatur et pauperi, ut qui respectu fratris in ecclesia non mouetur uel Christi contemplatione moueatur et qui non cogitat in labore adque in egestate conseruum uel Dominum cogitet in ipso illo quem despicit constitutum».
  204. *Op.* 24 (C Chr. SL IIIA, 71): «Demus Christo uestimenta terrena».
  205. *Op.* 13 (C Chr. SL IIIA, 63): «fructus tuos partire cum Christo, fac tibi possessionum terrestrium Christum participem».
  206. *Op.* 14 (C Chr. SL IIIA, 63): «Qui ergo locuples et diues es eme tibi a Christo aurum ignitum».
  207. *Op.* 62, II, 2 (CAMPOS, 596): «Nam cum dicat Paulus apostolus: «*Quotquot in Christo baptizati estis, Christum induistis*» (Gal. 3, 27); in captiuis fratribus nostris contemplandus est Christus et redimendus de periculo captiuitatis, qui nos redemit de periculo mortis, ut qui nos de diaboli faucibus exuit nunc ipse qui manet et habitat in uobis de barbarorum manibus exuatur et redimatur numaria quantitate qui nos cruce redemit et sanguine».
  208. *Quir.* 26 (C Chr. SL III, 121).
  209. Cf. P. GODET, *Cyprien (saint)* in *DTC*, III, 2466: «La théorie de la *sola fides* ne lui en impose pas et il prêche avec une particulière insistance en nécessité des oeuvres».



210. *Op.* (C Chr. SL IIIA, 57): «Numquam denique, fratres dilectissimi, admonitio diuina cessauit et tacuit quominus in scripturis sanctis tam ueteribus quam nouis semper et ubique ad misericordiae opera Dei populus prouocaretur et canente adque exhortante Spiritu sancto quisque ad spem regni caelestis instruitur facere eleemosynas iuberetur».
211. *Ibidem*: «*Frangere esurienti panem tuum et egenos sine tecto inducere in domum tuam. Si uideris nudum, uesti et domesticos seminis tui non despicias*» (Is. 58,7)».
212. *Op.* 8 (C Chr. SL IIIA, 60): «utique qui secundum praeceptum Dei eleemosynas facit Deo credit».
213. *Op.* 15 (C Chr. SL IIIA, 64): «Intuere in euangelio uiduam praeceptorum caelestium memorem».
214. *Ibidem*: «quando hoc documento operari etiam pauperes debeant».
215. *Op.* 17 (C Chr. SL IIIA, 66): «Et illa nodum Christum sciebat, nondum praecepta eius audierat».
216. *Op.* 20 (C Chr. SL IIIA, 68): «*Omnibus diebus uitae tuae, fili, Deum in mente habere et noli praeterire praecepta eius, iustitiam fac omnibus diebus uitae tuae et noli ambulare uiam iniquitatis, quoniam agente te ex ueritate erit respectus operum tuorum. Ex substantia tua fac eleemosynam et noli auertere faciem tuam ab ullo paupere. Ita fiet ut nec a te auertatur facies Dei*» (Tob. 4, 5-7)».
217. *Op.* 7 (C Chr. SL IIIA, 59): «Itaque in euangelio Dominus doctor uitae nostrae et magister salutis aeternae uiuificans credentium populum et uiuificationis consulens in aeternum inter sua mandata diuina et praecepta caelestia nihil crebrius manat et praecipit quam ut insistamus eleemosynis dandis».
218. *Op.* 17 (C Chr. SL IIIA, 66): «ut ex hoc appareat quantum in ecclesia peccet qui se et filios Christo anteponebat diuitias suas seruat nec patrimonium copiosum cum indigentium paupertate communicat».
219. *Op.* 19 (C Chr. SL IIIA, 67): «Bis delinquis et geminum ac duplex crimen admittis: et quod non praeparas filiis tuis Dei patris auxilium et quod doces filios patrimonium plus amare quam Christum».
220. *Op.* 23 (C Chr. SL IIIA, 70): «et se dixit offendi nisi egenti praestatur et pauperi».
221. *Op.* 16 (C Chr. SL IIIA, 65): «Quod et Iohannes in epistula sua ponit caritatem Dei apud eos non esse quos uideamus operari in pauperem nolle. «*Qui habuerit*», inquit, «*substantiam mundi et uiderit fratrem suum desiderantem et cluserit uiscera sua, quomodo caritas Dei manet in illo?*» (1 Io. 3, 17)».
222. *Op.* 5 (C Chr. SL IIIA, 57): «*Qui obturat aures ne audiat inbecillum, et ipse inuocabit Deum et non erit qui exaudiat eum*» (Prou. 21, 13). Neque enim mereri Dei misericordiam poterit qui misericors ipse non fuerit aut inpetrabit de diuina pietate aliquid in precibus qui ad precem pauperis non fuerit humanus».
223. Cf. R. R. DE ROUX, *La comunicación de bienes en la enseñanza de los Santos Padres* in *Theologica Xaveriana* 26 (1976) 350.
224. Cf. D'ALES, o.c., p. 351.





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